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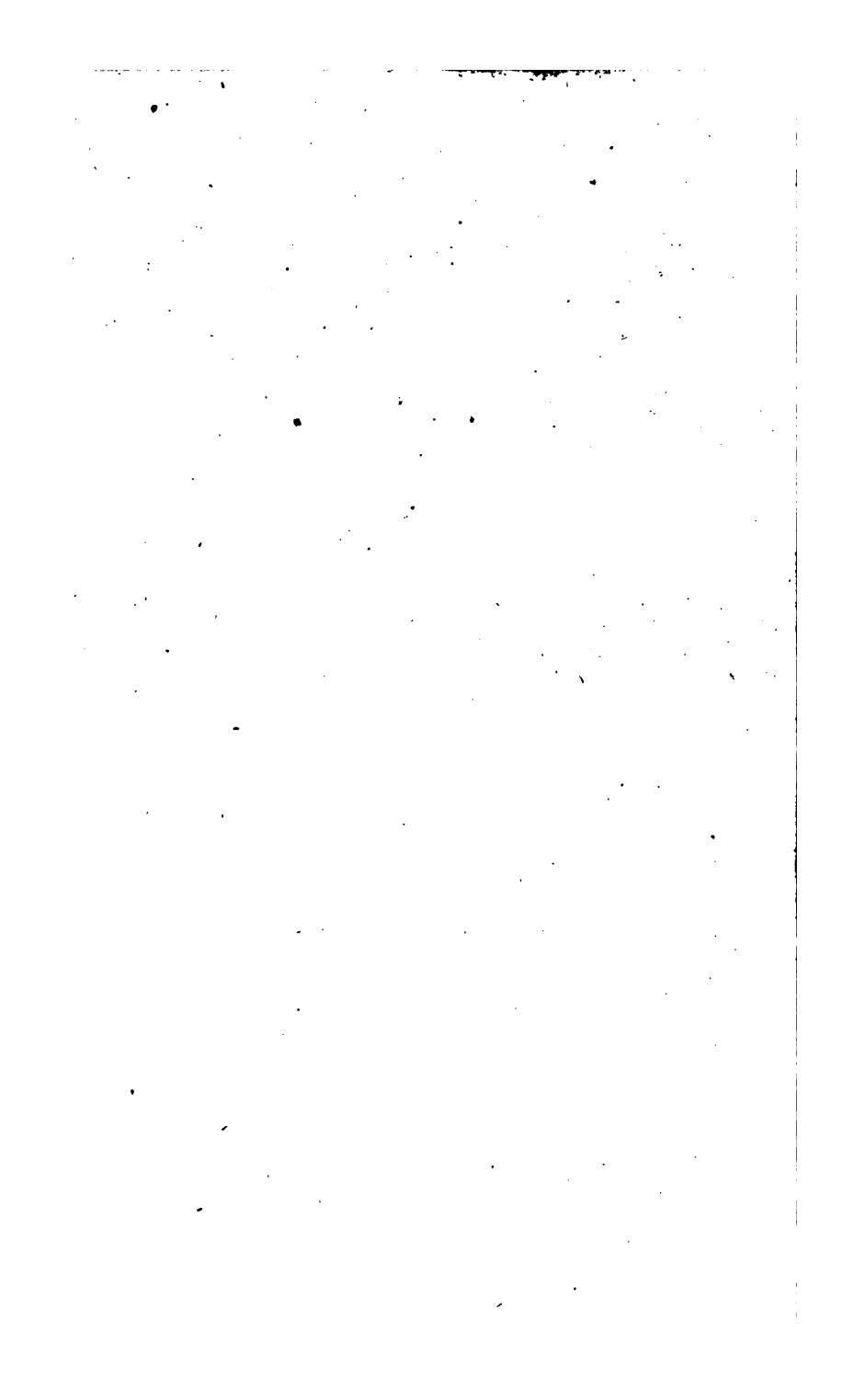
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THE
HOLY WEEK,
ꝑc.

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HOLY WEEK,

OR THE

PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR,

(WITH A SUPPLEMENT FOR EASTER.)

TAKEN FROM

DEAN STANHOPE'S

PARAPHRASE AND COMMENT

ON THE

EPISTLES AND GOSPELS USED IN THE LITURGY

OF THE

Church of England.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Paraphrase and Comment on the Epistles and Gospels is too well known, and the use of the present selection from it too obvious, to need introduction or preface. Still it may not be unnecessary to guard against such an imperfect apprehension of the contents of this little volume, as would restrain its use to the season for which it is primarily intended.

It does indeed supply an admirable course of readings for those last days of Lent, which in the ritual of our Church and the practice of many of her members are in an especial manner sacred to the consideration of our Blessed Saviour's Cross and Passion. But in so doing it treats of subjects at all times of the deepest interest; and particularly in the present day, when a fundamental verity of our religion, the atoning efficacy of that Cross and Passion, is

perhaps more than ever the subject of presumptuous attack and irreverent cavil.

Besides fulfilling the promise of its title-page, and providing a convenient manual for the devout observer of the Holy Week, it enforces the duties of humility and patience, and illustrates the doctrines of repentance and the Lord's supper; and, above all, it exhibits such a view of our Lord's *sufferings, death, and resurrection* as may do much, and most seasonably, to bring back those who have been shaken by the assaults or wiles of the disputers of this world to that "right faith," which "is to believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man."

How deeply the foundation of a Christian's hope is laid in that union of the Divine and human nature in the Person of the Incarnate Word, which both enabled our Lord to become a sacrifice for sin, and gave to that sacrifice a worth which made it a full and perfect satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, will be seen in the following pages. In them too it will be seen, that whilst the *manner* of this union remains as far above the reach of the most enlarged understanding, as the awful na-

ture of the mystery of GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH would seem of necessity to place its truth and irrefragable certainty are made as plain to the humble believer in the revealed word and will of God, as from its great concernment to the present and future happiness of man, he cannot but anxiously desire to find them.

To the service of Passion Week has been added that appointed for the holy-days of Easter, (reduced into one discourse,) that nothing might be wanting to build up the reader in the knowledge and certainty of those things which ought to be most surely received amongst us; but that we might perfectly and without all doubt believe in Him "Who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification;" to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, are to be ascribed all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*



THE
HOLY WEEK,
&c.

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Who of Thy tender love towards mankind hast sent Thy only Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection, through the Same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen *.

THE EPISTLE.

PHILIP. II.

Paraphrase.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus :

5 With regard to the charity and mutual condescensions I am exhorting you to, make the *humility* and won-

* Rom. viii. 23. 1 John iv. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 5. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

PHILIP. II.

Paraphrase.

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God :

7 But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men :

8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name :

10 That at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ;

11 And that every

derful love of Jesus Christ your pattern.

6 Who, though He was very God, and would, in exerting all the glory and majesty of the *Divine* nature, have taken no more than belonged of right to Him ; yet did He not affect to appear in His native greatness and glory ;

7 but laid all that aside ; and did not disdain to live in *human* nature, not only as man, but as the meanest servant of God, ministering to the wants of men,

8 and stooping so very low as to die, nay to die the most painful and ignominious death, in obedience to His heavenly Father's will, and for the common benefit of mankind.

9, 10, 11 This unparalleled act of obedience God hath rewarded, by advancing His *human* nature to universal dominion ; that the man Christ Jesus should now rule over, and be adored by all creatures ; that all nations should acknowledge this King, and by submitting to His laws and government promote the glory of God the Father, Who delights to be honoured in the

PHILIP. II.

Paraphrase.

tongue should confess that	belief and obedience paid to
Jesus Christ is Lord, to	His blessed Son, and His gos-
the glory of God the	pel.
Father.	

 COMMENT.

THE good effects which our church proposes to herself from this portion of scripture we plainly learn, from the Collect for the day, to be *humility* and *patience*. The former is to be expressed by thinking no good office beneath us, whereby we may contribute to the relief of our brethren in *their* sufferings; the latter by contentedness and constancy of mind in submitting to *our own*. In order to excite and establish these good dispositions in us, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, is here set forth as our pattern; His love and condescension, for our example; that we, so far as the difference of circumstances will allow, may not grudge to do as He hath done before us. His exaltation and reward is also mentioned for our encouragement; that we may depend upon the like being done to us in proportion, which hath already been done to Him, by way of recompense for such kind humiliation.

To treat this subject as we ought, it will be requisite to consider, *first*, What our Lord did, and how we are bound to Him. *Secondly*, What He received, and how this assures us of being rewarded like Him.

1. A just sense of what our Lord did we never can have without right notions concerning the dignity of His Person: which therefore the apostle hath here illustrated, in terms that speak Him very God and very man:—the *form of God* (ver. 6, 7,) as strongly inferring the former, as the *likeness and fashion of men* does the latter;—if we regard only the force of the expressions themselves. And, as the whole course of His conversation, the things He did and suffered, living and dying, gave incontestable proof of the truth of His *human* nature: so, if we will allow St. Paul to argue with any consistence, his argument here overthrows the cavils usually objected to the truth of His *divine* nature. For how can the taking of the *likeness* or *fashion* of men (ver. 7, 8,) deserve to be thought an *emptying* or *humbling* of himself, in a person who is himself no more than man? How can the government of the whole world be committed to, or administered by a mere man? How can universal adoration (ver. 10,) become due to such an one? How can we suppose that such adoration would be enjoined by the Christian religion,—a religion that aimed so directly at curing idolatrous mankind of their monstrous sin and folly, which consisted properly in deifying men for their merits, and in ignorance of the One true God, *doing service to them which by nature are no gods*^b? But especially, how should a person deserve and obtain divine honours as a reward for his unparalleled humility, and piety, and most exemplary meekness, who, if he were not really God, and yet

^b Gal. iv. 8.

thought it not robbery to be equal with God^c, but suffered himself to be esteemed so, and gave occasion from his own words to be thus esteemed, and never warned those who took the occasion, (of any error or ill consequence in such an opinion) was certainly the proudest and most presumptuous, the profanest and most detestable blasphemer? To them, therefore, who acknowledge our Lord's divinity, St. Paul's reasoning is just and very pressing: but to refer it to such condescensions, as washing His disciples' feet, or even the indignities of His passion, in a man only, renders it weak and trifling. The terms expressing this voluntary humiliation are an empty pomp in comparison: and such as then indeed, but only then are full of significance and sound argument, when the perfection and majesty of Christ's divine, and the impotence and vileness of our human nature are understood for the height He came down from, and the depth to which He descended.

Concerning this condescension how marvellous it is in itself, and how forcible an engagement to humility and charity upon all who believe and reap the benefits of it, I have on another occasion endeavoured to make men sensible, when the church commemorated the blessing of our Lord *taking upon Him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men^d*. That yet more amazing humiliation of *becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, is matter more peculiarly suitable to the devotions of

^c Phil. ii. 6.

^d See Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I. Comment on the Gospel for Christmas Day.

this day : and to it, therefore, I shall chiefly confine my discourse.

That crucifixion was of all deaths the most painful, the most opprobrious, a punishment reserved for the vilest of slaves, and the heinourest of malefactors, I can scarcely suppose any of my readers ignorant. But if they be, the history of our dear Redeemer's sufferings, so particularly rehearsed, so often repeated in the service of this week, will not fail to possess them with right apprehensions of it. Waving, therefore, any farther enlargement for the present concerning that which our thoughts will, for some succeeding days, find themselves obliged to dwell upon, I apply myself immediately to the force, and fitness of this example for producing, in the minds of all who consider it, those two dispositions already mentioned, which the Collect hath taught us at this time most seasonably to pray for.

1. The *first* of these is *humility* : which it is evident no person, no instance, no action ever had, ever could have, so direct a tendency to promote. Well therefore might this Saviour invite men to *learn* of Him, as being *meek and lowly* * ; since none was ever by nature so exalted, none by choice so abased : none could so empty himself of glory and power as He had done ; even though His appearance upon earth had been made in all the riches and splendour of the greatest monarch that ever the world knew. But to render His goodness still more astonishing, He *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister* : and thought the *giving His own life a ransom* † an office not too kind ;

* Matt. xi. 29.

† Matt. xx. 28.

and the doing this in the quality of a servant and a criminal, an office not too mean for the sake of doing good.

The most fatal corruption, and perhaps that which sticks the closest to our nature, is *pride*: fit therefore above all others to be particularly countermined, and quite beat out of countenance by Him, Who came into the world on purpose to correct our corruptions, and to renew our nature. This vice consists in undue exaltations of ourselves, and of consequent disdain and contempt of others. But who are those selves? Who those others? Lost and undone wretches all; lost and undone by the pride of the first Adam, and so must have continued to eternity if not rescued by the humility of the Second. Do we then insist with the utmost rigour upon points and niceties of respect, upon place and precedence, and cast away our own, or invade another's life (murderers in both) upon the very jealousy of an affront? Do we neglect our poorer, or in any respect meaner brethren, behold their miseries with indifference, hold them so far unworthy our pains, or costs, or personal good offices, as scarcely to allow them pity or regard? Nay but, O man! look upon the blessed Jesus. See the King of heaven making Himself of no reputation, eating with the traitor, admitting his unfaithful kiss, mute before his judges, crucified with thieves; and all for them whom thou pursuest with revenge, or passest over with disdain: for thee, who thus reproachest the mercy by which thou art redeemed, the Lord that thus redeemed thee. Compare the indignities He submit-

ted to with thine: His unbounded charity with thy angry resentments, scornful mien, and hard-hearted coldness; and thou wilt soon perceive that the pride, the cruelty, the unconcernedness, which in any man is wicked, in the disciples of a crucified Master is perfectly absurd—a contradiction to the name of Christian, while thou wilt not let *the same mind be in thee, which was in Christ Jesus*. 'Tis true indeed, He hath far exceeded all that is possible for us to imitate. But the less proportion the utmost we can do bears to His amazing condescension for our sakes, the more must we for whom He stooped so low, if we think any thing too much for them for whom He likewise stooped so low, find our own narrowness of spirit, and too delicate distinctions (where there is so little ground for such) reproached and condemned. And well it were, if we would seriously reflect, that this Saviour is one day to be our Judge; if we would ask ourselves, how we then shall be able to stand before Him; *Who, though He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled Himself to the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

2. The other virtue I would recommend is *patience*; easy to be attained, when that last mentioned, humility, hath opened the way to it: for it is pride, especially, that disposes us to be angry and revengeful, fretful and querulous; uneasy with our fortunes, and unthankful to Providence. Against all which evil diseases of the mind what antidote more proper, more powerful, can we think of, than the example of the meek, suffering Jesus? If our quiet be

disturbed, our possessions invaded, our persons insulted, our reputation aspersed by the malice of unreasonable, wicked men; let us remember the perpetual vexations, the injuries and affronts, the lives and contradictions of sinners against Himself, which through the whole course of His ministry He endured; but which in the tragical scene this week presents us with were outrageous beyond any comparison. If poverty or friendless trouble be our grievance, this assimilates us but the more to that Son of God, Who for our sakes became poor, subsisted on the pious bounty of His hearers and attendants; but in the hour of His enemies, and approach of danger was betrayed by one, denied by another; and forsaken by all His disciples. If pain, or sickness tempts us to repine, what gout, what stone, what melancholy can be more afflicting than the tortures He went through, the acute pangs of His dolorous crucifixion, and the cutting sorrows which wounded His soul even unto death?—so far are our most sensible afflictions short of that weight of sorrow, with which it pleased the Lord to bruise this Son of His love in the day of His fierce anger. But could we suppose them equal, yet doth not this make a mighty difference, and ought it not to compose our spirits to submission, that His obedience was an act perfectly free, His sufferings chosen for our benefit, and not His own? but we, alas! as creatures, are entirely at the mercy of our common Master and Maker: as sinners, are bound to acknowledge the righteousness of God, in all that is come upon us; to lay our mouths in the dust, and recollect, with the penitent thief, that

we are justly under the same condemnation ^s. For *This man* did *nothing amiss*; but all that we receive, and a great deal more than we receive in this world, is but *the due reward of our evil deeds*. And doth *a man* complain for the punishment of his sin? Can impatience, and discontent, and hard accusations of that Providence Which disposes all events, become one, who in the course of justice had brought misery upon himself by his own faults? Can he murmur at this when he suffers as a principal, when so much more was laid upon a proxy? an innocent proxy? especially, too, when the wisdom and goodness, no less than the justice of God, have their part in every such dispensation? for, as Our Blessed Master was an example in the bearing, so is He likewise a pattern in the reward of our afflictions. And on that account the Epistle for the day likewise calls upon us to contemplate Him in His exaltation. And therefore I proceed now to explain very briefly, in the

II. *Second place*, what our Lord received in recompense of His humility and patience, and how this assures us of being rewarded like Him.

1. Of our Lord's recompense we have an account in the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses; which acquaint us, that it consisted in an exceeding high exaltation of Him, far above any the most excellent creatures; in making Him the sovereign ruler of the whole world; in giving Him a title to the humblest adoration; and in the publication of His gospel and His glories over the face of the whole earth.

But, in what respect and capacity these honours were conferred on Christ is the main point to be attended to in the case now under consideration. As God, they could not be conferred; for His glory in this regard was perfect before. He could not thus receive any reward, any increase of honour. That supreme and absolute dominion was inherent and essential to Him: that universal adoration was His strict due from all eternity. Whatever addition He was capable of, He must be capable of as man: the elevation of His *human* nature is therefore the thing intended by the apostle. In this nature it was that He obeyed, and merited, and suffered; in this consequently it is that He was rewarded and exalted.

And a marvellous exaltation it is, to place human nature upon the throne of God; to subject to this angels, and principalities, and powers, men and devils, all things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth. A suitable reward it is to that nature, which suffered such indignities and pains, for all the barbarous treatment and bitter torment it endured here below, to shine so bright, and partake in all the majesty of the Son of God; Who, by uniting it inseparably to His own Person, and thus vouchsafing to take part in its infirmities and sufferings, entitled this human nature, now His own likeness, to a share in all the bliss and glories of that divine nature, which was originally, and always His own: so that He is not any more, as formerly He was, the governor of the world, and the object of men's worship as God only, but as God and man both: than which nothing could more effectually conduce to *the glory of His*

Father; because nothing could more illustrate His justice, and wisdom, and goodness; nothing more undeniably demonstrate the acceptance and efficacy of that redemption so admirably contrived for abolishing the guilt and punishment of sin, and retrieving the immortality and happiness of mankind.

2. For, *secondly*, this method of dealing with our Lord gives us all imaginable assurance, that they who conform themselves to His virtues shall be proportionably conformed to Him in the reward of them. The reason is, because in all He did and suffered for the salvation of men; and so again in all He received by way of recompense for those actions and sufferings, He acted not in any separate and personal capacity, but all along sustained a public character. This character is a consequence of His incarnation; the blessed effects whereof turn all upon this—that the Son of God transacted the whole affair of our redemption, in the form and nature of those He came to redeem. Had He, therefore, at His entrance into the world united Himself to any one man's person, the influence and benefit accruing from such union must have been of extent equal to that of the union. That single person, I mean, to whom He was united; and no other, could have been redeemed by it. But now our blessed Saviour, when He became man, clothed Himself with a body formed in the womb of the Virgin by the operation of the Holy Ghost. His Person was still divine, and the same It ever had been: only He united to It, and exhibited Himself in our flesh, after a manner altogether extraordinary and miraculous. This was a taking upon Him human

nature, which rendered Him the common representative of all mankind. In this is founded the title, given Him by the apostle, of *the second Adam*.^h For as all human nature was included in Him, Who Himself descended from none, and from Whom all descended ; so was all human nature made anew, as it were, in Him, Whose human body and soul were as immediate a work of God as that, whereby our *first* parent's body was formed *out of the dust of the ground*, and animated with *the breath of life*ⁱ. As therefore all mankind did virtually sin and die in Adam, because the whole human nature was then in him ; so are all mankind virtually righteous and restored to life in Christ, because He took human nature at large ; and what He did, and suffered, and received in that nature, are the acts, and sufferings, and rewards of human nature ; consequently all who partake of this nature are not only certain of, but may in some sense be said already to be vested in that happiness, which human nature in Him by already possessing it secures their common right to : and thus far all shall certainly partake of it. Death was the punishment of sin : this is done away as effectually by the *Second*, as it had been introduced by the *first* Adam. Their bodies and souls shall both be restored to life, and live for ever. But the forgiveness of sins, and the happiness of heaven are promised upon certain conditions : and therefore, though all shall be immortal, yet only they who perform the conditions of the Gospel shall be happy in that immortality.

^h 1 Cor. xv.ⁱ Gen. ii. 7.

And this shews us at once the necessity, and the encouragement we all have, to imitate the virtues, for which our Lord was so conspicuous. The *necessity*, because nothing less than a likeness to His excellencies can advance us to a likeness of that bliss which rewarded them: the *encouragement*, because He is entered into heaven, not for Himself, but for us: the pledge of our immortality and glory, by our nature being already immortalized and glorified. Let us not then think any thing too much to do, or endure for our duty, and the good of souls; since where the *sufferings of Christ abound, His consolations will much more abound*. Let us read, and hear, and meditate on the Scriptures commended to our thoughts this week, with minds disposed to form themselves upon the model here before us. Let us carefully observe the interest we have in them; and rest perfectly satisfied, that by virtue of that union, which He in great humility hath been pleased to make, the sufferings and the rewards of Christ's human nature so far belong to us and all mankind, that all *who follow the example of His patience shall undoubtedly be partakers of His resurrection*^k. Which He of His infinite mercy grant, *Who was dead and is alive again, and liveth for evermore, and hath the keys of death and hell*^l: to Whom with the Father, and Holy Spirit, Three Persons and one God, be all honour, and glory, power, praise, and dominion, world without end. *Amen*.

^k Collect.^l Rev. i. 18.

THE GOSPEL.

MATTHEW XXVII. 1—54.

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death: and when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him That was valued, Whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And

when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus Which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with That Just Man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of Him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered, and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus Which is called Christ? They all said unto him, Let Him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of This Just Person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us

and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head.

And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched Him there; and set over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him,

wagging their heads, and saying, Thou That destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself: if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see, whether Elias will come to save Him. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the

earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly This was The Son of God.

The Gospels for this day and the following days of the week being altogether historical, and best understood by comparing the parallel places in the other evangelists, (all which are read in the course of the week), it is thought not necessary to swell this volume with particular paraphrases upon them.

COMMENT.

THOUGH Almighty God was pleased to permit that His blessed Son should suffer all the scandal and punishment due to the most heinous malefactors, yet did His wisdom order matters so, that all possible right should be done to His innocence. To this purpose we read such testimonies given of it, as, if the Jews had not been blinded by the obstinacy of their own inveterate malice and rage, were abundantly full, and clear enough to have convinced His bitterest enemies, that they did very wickedly in treating Him so ignominiously, so barbarously. He was acquitted in the most solemn and public manner by Herod and Pilate. All the evidence which the Jews laboured to pick up and suborne against Him, was acknowledged either insufficient or inconsistent. Nay, even the wicked instrument of delivering Him up into the hands of them that sought His life, enraged at their implacable and blood-thirsty proceedings, relented, desired to retract his bargain, openly confessed his own guilt and the unblemished holiness of his injured Master:

for, finding that the chief priests had declared Him guilty of blasphemy, and delivered Him over to the power of the Roman governor, even this wretched man was touched with a compassion of His case, and applied himself to the Jewish rulers to prevent farther mischief. *Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.* This is the first remarkable passage in the Gospel for the day; and my design is to inquire into the nature of Judas's repentance, as we find it here described; to shew what qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective; and afterwards to make such collections from hence, as the circumstances of that wretched man, and the foregoing particulars minister occasion for.

I. *First*, I shall inquire into the nature of Judas's repentance, and then what qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective: for that it was defective in the main, I suppose there need no other proofs than such as offer themselves from what our Saviour Himself spoke concerning him: *Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, save the son of perdition^m.* And again, *The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had never been bornⁿ.* Now, how these things could be true of Judas, if his repentance had been such as was available for procuring pardon

John xvii. 12.

ⁿ Matt. xxvi. 24.

and salvation, it is not possible to comprehend. He surely is not lost, whom true repentance recovers; nor had it been good for that man never to have been born, who is saved at last, though at the expense of never so painful and laborious a repentance; and, therefore, since no one truth in the Gospel is more express than this, that all who truly repent shall most certainly be saved, it must follow that the person; of whom those dreadful things are pronounced, did not truly and effectually repent.

The evangelist indeed tells us, that he *repented himself*^o; but then it is no less evident, that by *repenting* is not *every where* intended a change of heart and life; not the whole of that which repentance strictly signifies when made the condition of pardon and salvation, but only some part or imperfect degree of it; and thus we are to take it here. Not that Judas was a thorough penitent, and became a new man; but that he did something which is necessary to be done in order to our becoming new men. He felt some remorse for what he had done; he wished he had not done it at all. This is one of the first steps which all penitents set out with; it is the beginning, but very far from the perfection of repentance; and yet this is all which that expression seems here to import; and therefore no argument can be formed

^o I am well content to lay no particular stress upon the original word μεταμεληθεῖς here; it being sufficiently notorious, to any attentive reader, that μεταμίλεια and μετάνοια are promiscuously used in Scripture; any distinctions, therefore, from the manner of expression, are of very little or no force, in the case before us.

from hence to prove the truth and validity of his repentance, properly so called. The most that can be made of it is this ; that somewhat he did towards it, but not enough to bring it to due perfection ; and therefore it is that I purpose to consider, so far as this passage will guide us in the matter, how far he advanced, and how far he fell short.

1. Now, *first*, One good step towards repentance was that Judas, as I said, expressed great sorrow for what he had done, condemned himself severely for his wicked treachery. This is usually the beginning of reformation, to be sensible of one's misery, and sorely afflicted for it : but then we are to look at the motives, which stir that passion and remorse in an offender's breast. Few people are so desperately hardened as not to be struck with terror, when they see the wretched consequences of their sins ; and fear and suffering are arguments, which oftentimes lay hold on those who seem lost to all arguments beside. Many are so profligate as to have outgrown all impressions of ingenuousness and shame ; but we cannot continue to be men, and remain unconcerned for our own interest and safety, when once made sensible of it. Now though these are considerations which are commonly the first in hardened and habitual sinners, and capable of being improved from a natural to a godly sorrow ; yet, where this is the main, or the only argument of our remorse, I am afraid it is not sufficient to work *repentance to salvation not to be repented of* ; for in this case we do not hate the fault, but the punishment. Nor are our dispositions changed one whit, or our love of God at all increased by it. And such seems to

have been the sorrow of Judas: he found matters grown to a desperate height; that there was no probable appearance of Jesus escaping the malice of the Jews; he recollected, it is likely, the predictions of our Lord concerning the dreadful vengeance which should overtake the person that betrayed Him to death. These, and probably many other dreadful reflections working together, with all that confusion which fear and guilt use to create in men's minds, seem to have made up that concern which the text hath expressed by *repenting himself*; a concern resulting from a principle of self-preservation, in the most carnal notion of the thing; but we find not any due sense of the villainy of the fact; not any condemning himself as the basest, the most ungrateful, the most abandoned wretch alive; one that had violated the laws of God, and society, and nature, and cast all fidelity, and gratitude, and common humanity behind his back; all which, and a great deal more were not only aggravations due to his crime, but the very properest occasions of remorse; and such as till he came to be very tenderly touched for, and deeply wounded with, he was not capable of arriving at the true contrition of a sincere penitent.

2. *Secondly*, Another advance towards repentance was Judas's bringing back the thirty pieces of silver, for which he had sold his Master's life. And this is likewise necessary, that men, who have offended for profit, should not suffer the wages of iniquity to stick to their fingers; but disgorge all their polluted gains, and make restitution to the utmost of their power. For God will accept no man's sorrow, who

is still pleased with the rewards of his injustice, and holds the wealth fast, while he pretends to abhor the guilt that procured it. It is the vainest thing in the world to hope to be accepted, or to obtain a pardon of those indirect dealings, by which men have enriched themselves, without making satisfaction for the wrongs they have done, and shewing that they do in good earnest detest their frauds and oppressions, by giving up freely and entirely the products which these have injuriously extorted. It is not a profession of sorrow, or a charitable legacy upon a death-bed, which will serve the turn. The altar will not sanctify the gift, or the giver. If men think to compound the matter with God, by making over to Him a part; this will never insure their souls, if in the meanwhile they build their houses in blood; if they transmit plentiful estates to their heirs, or raise their families by that increase of substance, which was purchased by grinding the face of the poor, or crushing the innocent, who have a rightful title to what they, or their posterity enjoy. This is doctrine, it may be, hard of digestion to the great and greedy; and the parting with the fruits of their wickedness is a severe saying, which they cannot endure to hear of. So far did Judas outdo too many in his repentance. And if he, notwithstanding, perished in his iniquity, what hopes can they have of forgiveness, who refuse to come up to his example in this particular? He found not grace, though he sought it with restitution: and yet they flatter themselves in their hypocrisy without it. But, alas! the tears of the oppressed and injured

will move compassion above, when those of the dissembling penitent will be rejected with disdain. And, be assured, repentance is but dissembling, till the spoils of deceit are cast away far from you, and all unrighteous acquisitions put into their true and proper channel again.

3. *Thirdly*, Here is also a farther progress toward repentance in that public and free confession, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*: (Ver. 4.) by which confession Judas did not only take the shame of his fault upon himself, but in some degree made satisfaction to his injured Master. Men might be apt to suspect, that how fair an appearance soever Jesus made to the world, yet had there not been something of private blame, which one so intimately well acquainted with Him as Judas must be was conscious of; a disciple, a friend, a constant companion, one that had been taught and sustained by Him could never have entertained so inhumanly treacherous a thought, as to give Him up into the hands of His enemies that thirsted for His blood. But now all the ground of these jealousies was taken away by the traitor's own testimonies of remorse, and open declaration of his Lord's unblemished innocence. And this would not only vindicate Him to the rest of the world, and preserve His honour unstained to all posterity; but it ought likewise to have brought over those wicked accomplices, and have diverted the Jewish rulers from the purpose of murdering so holy a Person. For after such an evidence they were more inflexibly wicked than

even Judas himself, in pursuing their malice to this Person's destruction.

Now here again Judas far outstripped too many pretenders to repentance. Men are, it may be, well enough content to acknowledge their guilt between God and their own consciences, but hardly to be prevailed upon so far as to make an open confession of their crimes, or do public justice to those whose rights or reputations they have injured. There is a sort of preposterous modesty, which cannot bear the reproaches of other men, at the same time that it hath little or no apprehensions of the condemnation of one's own mind; and is much more afraid, that the world should know one hath done amiss, ~~than~~ that God, the Judge of all the world, should know it. Whereas, in truth, this taking of shame to ourselves is much more necessary, in order to restitution and satisfaction for any wrong done to our brethren, than any private confessions to God can possibly be. For as we cannot hide our injustice from Him, so neither can they whom we have injured suffer in His esteem. And therefore no acknowledgments of our faults are sufficient, but such as make them reparation: such, as may be effectual to the correcting any mistaken imputations in those, whom our unrighteous proceedings had led into mistakes; and lay the blame where of right it ought to lie, that is, upon the offender himself. A frank and open confession is so much a debt to the innocent, that we have by no means cleared him as we ought, till the acknowledgment, the sorrow, and the reproach of our having

done amiss be made as solemn, and as generally known, if it be possible, as ever the injury or the aspersion had been. Thus only can we prevent that yet more to be dreaded publication of our crimes; which, whether we will or no, shall be made before angels and all mankind at the last terrible day of account, when God shall bring the whole world to judgment, and detect all the hidden things of dishonesty.

Some indeed there are, who have taken pains to shew, that even in the instances last mentioned Judas had by no means done all that became him; in that he made no restitution or confession to our Lord, ~~Who~~ who was the injured party; but only to the Jewish rulers, his partners and companions in wickedness. But it were heartily to be wished, that the generality of wicked persons would be persuaded to keep him company thus far, and go the same lengths that he did. They might upon these conditions entertain much more reasonable hopes of attaining to another, no less necessary, qualification of repentance, in which his was manifestly wanting; and that is, an humble, but stedfast faith in the mercy of God, and a dependence upon that sacrifice of His Son, which is available for the forgiveness even of the chief of sinners, provided they be believing and returning sinners.

Now here was Judas' downfall. The horror of his guilt threw him into amazement, and confusion, and despair; and kept him from applying the proper, the only remedy that could have any effect for his recovery. For whether we understand the account

given us of his death here, and in the *first chapter* of the *Acts*, of laying violent hands upon himself, or whether of a suffocation by extreme melancholy, either sense implies intolerable agonies, and fruitless remorse, a fearful expectation of divine vengeance, and a distrust of mercy for so great a villainy.

Here then, I conceive, lay the main defect of Judas' repentance. And then we cannot be at a loss for a substantial reason, why it met with no better success. For repentance does not barely consist in sorrow for sin, but in such a sorrow as is tempered and supported with hope; not in a mere confession of sin, but in such an one as trusts to be forgiven for sins confessed. It imports a change of manners: but if there be not first a strong persuasion that our sincere endeavours for the future will be kindly received, and our former transgressions graciously passed over, all ground and encouragement for such a change are utterly taken away. It requires, that we choose new objects for our affections, draw them off from the world and its treacherous allurements, from the flesh and its lusts, and settle them upon God, and heavenly things. But he who loves God must of necessity consider Him under some other characters, than those of a stern Judge and implacable Avenger. He must have some notions of His goodness; both of that which is essential to the perfection of the Divine nature, and of that which infers a disposition to be good and gracious, tender and compassionate to himself in particular. For nothing but good is, or can possibly be the motive of our love. And if we have no per-

suasion of that good, it is as to all effect upon us, as if it were not at all: for every thing works upon the passions of men, not according to what it is in its own nature, but in proportion to what they apprehend concerning it. And therefore no man can fix his affections on heaven and heavenly joys, who hath no prospect, no hope of ever having any part or place there. It is true, indeed, reason will not lead us to infer that sorrow for the past, or amendment for the time to come can be any equivalent satisfaction for our offences. But revelation hath assured us that God may be appeased; and it hath told us how He is appeased—even by the precious blood of That Son, Who came to give His life a ransom for many. God hath declared Himself so fully in this matter, that the very heinousness of our sins is not a greater provocation, than the despairing of mercy after we have committed them. For that distrust does, in effect and by necessary interpretation, make God a liar, and disparage the merits of Christ's sacrifice. It plainly argues that we think God will not be so good as His word; and that there are some offences so horrid, that the sufferings of His Son cannot be a sufficient compensation for them. Thus, hope of mercy, and faith in the promises and satisfaction of Christ are the very life and spirit of true repentance; essential, and indispensably requisite to quicken and recommend every part of it. And, consequently, so ineffectual must Judas' repentance needs have been, which was destitute of these necessary qualifications.

If it be inquired, how Judas came to be wanting

in this point? the immediate cause undoubtedly was, that God had forsaken and withdrawn His grace from him. But then, if we pursue this inquiry still farther, and drive it up to its true head, the matter will fall at last unto Judas himself, as the proper and original cause of his own misery and destruction. For never was there a more flagrant instance of grace obstinately resisted and abused, of advantages, and knowledge to do better cast behind one's back, of presumptuous and inflexible resolutions to do wickedly, of reproofs and timely warnings lost upon a hardened wretch, than we may observe in the case before us. Then was the season of grace, and means and opportunities were not wanting for desisting from his villainous enterprise. It is true, the devil is said to *have entered into* Judas; which signifies, no doubt, a more than ordinary influence and power over him. But we shall do well to take notice, that this is not affirmed of him, or of any other person in Scripture, till we are first informed of some very grievous and often repented impieties, which have provoked God to give them over to their own perverseness. When the Spirit of the Lord is driven away, then, and not before, the evil spirit enters, and takes possession. Then He permits the tempter to have his full scope with them, by taking off those assistances and restraints, which before were afforded as a check to the lusts, and a control to his temptations: and then God denies them the helps of His preventing and strengthening grace, which they have so long resisted and defeated.

II. I have now done with the *first* head I proposed, and from the consideration of Judas' repentance proceed to make such inferences from it, as are suitable to this subject.

1. And *first*, let me most earnestly exhort and intreat all that read this passage to consider the mighty danger, and dismal consequences of known and wilful sins, before it be too late to prevent, or to remedy them. One very successful artifice, made use of by the devil for our destruction, is to dress up his temptations to such advantage, that all the profit, all the pleasure, all we propose to ourselves as our end in sinning shall be set in its best light, and appear in proportions larger than the life; but all the difficulty, all the danger, the troubles, and ill effects of it shall be infinitely lessened to, or altogether concealed from our sight. This deceit is one cause why we feel ourselves so very different men while we are pressing forward, heated with desire and big with false and flattering expectations, from what we are when looking back again upon the thing done, and stung with reproaches and self-condemnations. For, alas! these will be sure to have their turn too; and the devil is not wanting in his address in this point also. Before the fact, he hides all discouraging circumstances; and insinuates how small the fault, and how easy to be forgiven: afterwards, he shifts the scene, distracts us with the smallest representations of our guilt, and labours to magnify our crime so as to be more horrid than can be forgiven. By the former he blows us up into presumption; by the latter he sinks us into despair;

and both contribute equally to his purpose of contriving our ruin. But then, to be sure, he hath us fast when we are entangled in the snare, careless what we do, and verily persuaded that there is no possibility of ever getting disengaged. The smart of a *wounded spirit* even when there remain some hopes of a cure, and the bitter reflections of a trembling true penitent are grievous to be borne. But no words can express the misery of that man, who hath sinned himself past hope, and is given up to the tortures and insupportable anguish of a condemning conscience.

This was directly the state of Judas. His greediness of gain blinded his eyes, and quite diverted his thoughts from considering the horror of his treachery. But then that reflection fell upon his mind with this terrible back-blow; and he that brought again the thirty pieces of silver, would no doubt have given ten thousand worlds, had he been master of them, never to have yielded to this villainous suggestion. When therefore we are assaulted by any temptations, let us be careful to take the thing in all its different prospects. Let us consider betimes not only the baits of pleasure, or profit; or greatness, which are apt to dazzle the eyes of unwary sinners; but remember withal, that sorrow and death are upon the hook, and think what we shall "do in the end thereof." Think, I say, what our condition will be, if God should abandon us to black thoughts, to the agonies of guilt and despair; when we shall see nothing but the dreadful looking for of terrible indignation; when friends shall surround us; and flames

shall be continually flashing in our faces, and our hell shall be already begun upon earth! In other cases our fears are apt to be the most wild and extravagant of all our passions, and to scare us with images far greater and more frightful than the life: but this is the peculiar aggravation of a lost sinner's unhappiness; that the misery he lives in perpetual dread of infinitely exceeds all the terrors even of his most jealous and melancholy apprehensions. An eternity of torments is what no finite imaginations can ever come up to. And as little can we form to ourselves a just idea of the extremity of those torments; which, though they were to last but for a moment, would even thus be more insupportable than whole ages of the most exquisite misery which flesh and blood is capable of enduring in this present life.

Oh! were we but careful to lay these things fairly before us, they surely would check us in our hottest and most eager pursuits, and convince us that no consideration can be sufficient for the commission of one deliberate sin. Now this is what the example of Judas may be serviceable to us in. We may profit ourselves of it greatly by those fruitless pangs of remorse, which God rejected when He had first been rejected by his obstinacy; by its working in us a dread of that justice and indignation, which will not always be intreated if we outstand the season of grace; by convincing us of the wisdom of that advice, which otherwise our own sad experience will confirm when it is too late: *Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent; for, if thou comest too near it, it will bite thee: the teeth thereof are as the teeth of a lion,*

slaying the souls of men: All iniquity is as a two-edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed^p.

2. *Secondly*, The instance before us should be a discouragement, as against all temptations and deliberate offences in general, so more especially against *covetousness*. 'Tis not for nothing that our Lord hath given that very solemn warning in this matter particularly; *Take heed and beware of covetousness^q*. He knows how apt this vice is above all others to get within us, and how powerful to overthrow all regard for God and religion. Upon this account, when the devil had been baffled in other attempts, he makes this effort upon our blessed Saviour; *All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me^r*. Hence St. Paul tells us that *the love of money is the root of all evil; that they who will be rich, that is, who resolve and make it their business, and stick at nothing which may help them to be so, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition^s*. And certainly it ought to add no small weight to those testimonies, that the most detestable villainy that ever was thought of under the sun was owing to the force of this temptation; that the only instance of a despairing sinner left upon record in the New Testament is that of a treacherous and greedy Judas. Nor let us vainly suppose ourselves above the power of this lust: for who shall presume to be secure, when a friend, a disciple, an apostle, a preacher of

^p Eccl. xxi. 2, 3.

^r Matt. iv. 9.

^q Luke xii. 15.

^s 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

righteousness, a worker of miracles was yet seduced to sell his Master and his soul upon so sordid a consideration as thirty shekels of silver? This ought to put us all upon our guard; and the fate of Judas stands as a monument and eternal admonition to all that make *gold their god*, and the *fine gold their confidence*: a warning, not only of their proneness to do wickedly, but of the bitter fruits of doing so; for God does often deal with such as He did with Judas. He disturbs the enjoyment of their ill-gotten wealth, turns their polluted gains into their greatest curse and torment; and, instead of all the advantage and happiness they proposed to themselves, leaves them nothing of their wicked purchase in their hands but anxiety and anguish, terrors and discontent in this world, and everlasting misery in the next.

3. *Thirdly and lastly*, The example of Judas here instructs us, what false measures those men go upon, who measure the truth and efficacy of their repentance by the inward agonies and sufferings of their own minds: as if God could never bring a sinner to heaven any other way than by leading him through the regions of hell. 'Tis true, indeed, no man repents truly without a very serious and afflicting concern for having offended. But then this must be an active and a fruitful sorrow, such as produces a just displeasure against ourselves, an irreconcilable hatred of sin, vigorous resolutions, and a watchful care to avoid it for the future. And it is not a slight and superficial sorrow that will suffice for these purposes. But be the degree of smart more or less, whatsoever worketh repentance (that is, effectually changes our

spirit and behaviour) is without doubt a *godly sorrow*, and great and painful enough. Let us then try our sorrow by these marks, and judge of the degree by the effects: for this rule can never deceive us. But to measure its efficacy by the degree is a very preposterous method, and liable to many great and fatal mistakes. For no remorse is so afflicting as that which shuts men out from all comfort: and yet this remorse is of all other the most fruitless, and the farthest off from true repentance.

There may be, and there often is great danger in the very degree of our sorrow. For if this degenerate into astonishment and perplexity of heart, into the darkness of horror and confusion, into distrust of mercy through Christ, and a persuasion that our sin is greater than can ever be forgiven, it is as displeasing to God, and as destructive to repentance, as it is tormenting and uncomfortable to the patient's ownself. So that where these terrors are not the effect of disease, and a melancholy constitution, (as very often they are), they ought to be looked upon as a fresh aggravation of the fault. For this reason God promises to heal the *broken in heart*, to pour balm into these spiritual wounds by reviving hopes and seasonable consolations, and the supporting sense of His favour and readiness to be reconciled, and the cheering prospect of an everlasting bliss which shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of these pious mourners. And upon the same account St. Paul commands the Corinthians to *forgive and restore the incestuous person* whom they had cast out of the church, *lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over-much*

sorrow^t. In a word, God values men's reformation more than their sighs and tears. Indeed He values these only so far as they contribute to that; and those men are sorry as they ought, who are so sorry as to sin no more. Let no man therefore distract himself with vain and fantastical notions in this matter; but let us every one now so lament our past offences as to forsake and amend them. And *blessed are all they who thus mourn; for they shall not fail to be comforted.*

MONDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

FOR THE EPISTLE.

ISAIAH LXIII.

Who is This That cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This That is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain

all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold : therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me ; and My fury it upheld Me. And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He had bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie ; so He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them : in His love and in His pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit : therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, Where is He That brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock ; Where is He That put His Holy Spirit within him ? That led them by the right-hand of Moses with His glorious arm, driving the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name ? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble. As a beast

goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory: where is Thy zeal and Thy strength; the sounding of Thy bowels and of Thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting. O Lord, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways? and hardened our heart from Thy fear? Return, for Thy servants' sake, the tribes of Thine inheritance. The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down Thy sanctuary. We are Thine: Thou never bearest rule over them; they were not called by Thy name.

COMMENT.

THIS chapter consists of three parts. In the *first* (ver. 1 to 7) the prophet describes a victorious deliverer, returning from the slaughter of his own and God's enemies. In the *second* (ver. 7 to 15) he breaks out into praise for all the wonderful mercies bestowed on His church and people; recounts the many signal appearances of His power in their favour, down from their rescue from the bondage of Egypt;

he enlarges upon the conducting them over the Red Sea through the wilderness to the land of promise; where at length He fixed them, and caused them to rest; and he intermingles with the mention of these blessings the ingratitude and disobedience of the Israelites, which often provoked God to chastise them with afflictions, and to suffer their enemies to gain advantage over them. In the *third* (ver. 15 to the end) he does in the name of that people earnestly apply to God by devout prayer; lament His displeasure, and their sins, the wretched cause of it; conjure Him by His former loving-kindness, by the relation He bore to them as His children and covenanted people; by the trust they reposed in Him alone, and by their present calamitous condition to assert His own right and honour, to deliver His sanctuary and church from the insults and tyranny of idolaters, who profaned His temple and persecuted His truth.

What particular juncture of circumstances this prophecy was directed to, it is not very material at present to spend time in examining. The method I am engaged in seems to make it properly my business to apply this scripture to such meaning and purposes, as the church by appointing it a part in the office of this day intended we should take it in. And therefore that signification, which is allied most nearly to the other portions of Holy Writ amongst which it stands in our liturgy, and to the design of this week's devotions, will need no other reason to recommend it to us.

Now in the *first* of those parts, which seems chiefly

to call for our meditation, the prophet introduces some person wondering at a surprising object which then presented itself. By that person some understand the prophet himself in a vision; others, as St. Jerome, the holy angels. The matter of this wonder is a conqueror returning bloody from battle: of whom the following account is given by way of dialogue, and in answer to the questions, who he is? and, why so habited?—that a mighty victory had been obtained, at the expense of much blood and slaughter, by the powerful but single arm of this mighty warrior; that by this victory a total rout was given to his adversaries at a time when, if he had not engaged, no other was disposed, no other able to have quelled the outrage and havock they were making: and that the stained garments he then wore (ver. 1.) demonstrated the sharpness of the engagement; as his mien, and manner of approach denoted the invincible greatness of his strength.

By this description there cannot, I conceive, be any reasonable doubt whether we be not now invited to contemplate the hardships, and the success of that combat with the enemies of our souls, by which Christ brought salvation to mankind. For such was His conquest of sin and death, when He wrested the prey out of the hands of Satan, and, as the apostle expresses it, *spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in His cross*. A conquest full of wonder, that in the lowest ebb of seeming weakness discovered so much of hidden power; that made the once infamous and accursed tree an instrument of honour to Himself; and of blessings to the whole

world; turned the object of all men's aversion and scorn to a means of *drawing all men to Him*; destroyed death by enduring it; by the pouring out of His own blood took vengeance on the malice of that wicked spirit which spilt it; and by the agonies of a body expiring under anguish insupportable hath prevented the everlasting torments of many millions of souls.

Such glorious effects as these deserve a place in our thoughts at this time; that they may put to silence the impertinence of those cavils, which unthinking and irreligious people do from the history of our Lord's death and sufferings take the confidence to start; and which, when that history is so oft inculcated, and uppermost in our minds, (as now it ought to be), the tempter may snatch this as a favourable opportunity for suggesting. Were we indeed to read the bare narrative, and rest in matter of fact alone, it might appear altogether unaccountable how God should give His own blessed Son, how that co-eternal Son should give Himself to so much misery and shame: but by joining the *Epistle* and *Gospel* of this day together, the reason of that mysterious dispensation is in some degree explained to us. The sufferings related *there* are abundantly justified by the beneficial consequences ascribed to them *here*. It would ill become us, surely, who enjoy the benefit—who are indeed the purchase—to deem the redemption of fallen man too dearly bought, or unworthy for the Son to undertake, since God, in mercy, was pleased to esteem it otherwise.

But as the advantages arising from hence prove

the *fitness* and *reasonableness*; so does another argument furnished by the prophet here argue the *necessity* of this dispensation. For, by saying that *He trod the wine-press alone, that there was no helper*, and the like, he does in effect affirm, as St. Peter did afterwards to the Jewish synagogue, that there is *no other, by whom men can be saved*^u. None less than He who undertook it was capable of procuring so glorious a deliverance. No mere man could be free from sins of his own; and all who are not so must stand in need of the sacrifice of another. Or if any man could be supposed wholly innocent, that innocence could only save himself. He therefore, that could vanquish sin, and death, and hell for others, must be much more than man. And he, who would attempt it upon the same terms our Jesus did, must be much more than man too. For *greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friends*^x; but to die, and so to die for enemies, and rebels, and traitors, (and sinners are all these) is a perfection of love, to which He only could come up Who is *Love* itself^y.

To Him, therefore, let us with all humility and thankfulness give the whole glory of this noble achievement; acknowledging all our happiness, and all our hopes to be the effect, not of our own, not of any other's, but entirely due to His invaluable merits. Let us, like the prophet here, when publishing His kindness, and reflecting (as at this time particularly we are bound to do) how dear it hath cost Him, not

^u Acts iv. 12. ^x John xv. 13. ^y 1 John iv. 8. 16.

forget at the same time to lament those sins of ours, which added to His account. For if Isaiah found it reasonable in terms so affectionate to magnify his people's deliverance out of Egypt, and settlement in the promised land, how insensible, how unworthy are they who read and hear the release from a heavier tyranny, the destruction of a spiritual Pharaoh, the passage into the true and heavenly Canaan opened at the expense of our Leader's own life, without impressions as grateful as human hearts can admit? If the prophets confess, that, after all those extraordinary appearances of Almighty God in their behalf, His people's disingenuous behaviour turned Him to be their enemy; how greatly ought we to fear, how carefully to avoid any unworthy returns to One Who hath loved us so tenderly; which may justly alienate His affection from us, and be at once our eternal ruin and reproach? If He, again, thought the former favours of God, and the remembrance of His covenant proper inducements to incline His mercy; with what confidence may we be allowed to approach Him in the anguish of our souls, in distresses and temptations, and when we plead His Son's name and merits for acceptance, and depend for all proper succours and comforts upon the goodness, which hath not only done, but endured so much for our sakes. 'Tis true, our difficulties are many, our enemies mighty, ourselves impotent to the last degree. But let it be remembered for our support, that more are they that are with us, than all that are or can be against us: that the heat of the action is over, and we march against a force already discomfited. He That is

mighty to save, He That hath trodden the wine press of His Father's wrath alone, hath broken them in His anger, and trampled them in His fury^a. And all the representations of His bitter sufferings, which we are now especially conversant with, are not only so many intimations how much this conquest cost Him, but certain evidences withal, that the bloody field is won. And all the prayers and tears, the fastings and mournings, that now humble our souls, and exercise our bodies, are not the proper and efficient causes of this conquest, but the instruments of applying and securing it to us. They are acts of repentance and obedience, which hope to be accepted in *the Beloved*, not in any virtue of their own abstracted from Him; decent expressions of gratitude and love to a Saviour, so liberal of Himself for our salvation. Thus we may die after His example; die to the sins which pierced His soul to death; and, rising again to righteousness, conquer as He hath done; conquer our vicious appetites effectually, and trample down every unruly passion. So shall we be qualified to attend, to bear a part in His triumphs; and in the midst of our religious sympathies, when melting away in sorrow for His agonies and death, have a right to sustain our spirits with the prospect of a part in the glories of His resurrection.

^a Rev. xix. 15.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. MARK XIV.

AFTER two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread ; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put Him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious ; and she brake the box, and poured it on His head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made ? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone ; why trouble ye her ? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good : but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could : she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray Him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to

give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the passover? And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening He cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him, one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And He answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with Me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it

to them: and they all drank of it. And He saith unto them, This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto Him, Although all should be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt. And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto

Peter, Simon, Sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again He went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer Him. And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand.

And immediately, while He yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. And he that betrayed Him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; take Him, and lead Him away safely. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to Him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed Him. And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took Me not: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. And they all forsook Him, and fled. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast

about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against Him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? what is it which these witness against Thee? But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say

unto Him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands.

And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went into the porch; and the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

COMMENT.

THE vileness of Judas' treachery in delivering up his Master to the will of those blood-thirsty enemies, whose implacable malice sought His life, we have had occasion in some measure to consider, when treating of yesterday's gospel. The next thing in order of time is our Lord's celebration of His last paschal supper, and the institution of that blessed sacrament

which He designed to be a constant memorial of His body broken, and His blood shed for us. Of this it is my purpose particularly to treat hereafter*. Let us at present therefore attend Him to the garden in company of His three choice friends, and thence to the high priest's hall. And so we shall employ the meditations of this day partly on His sufferings and behaviour there, and partly on the unhappy circumstances into which one of those beloved companions shortly after fell. The former will instruct us how much He was content to endure for our sakes; the latter will put us in mind of our own weakness, when content (and as we think able) to suffer much for His sake. Upon which occasion we will farther consider, what reparations are fit to be made for any failures of duty, into which such trials of our falsely supposed strength shall, for our humiliation, be permitted to drive us.

First, then, what more lively representation can we possibly desire of our Lord's willing sufferings for our sakes, than this which the tragical scene in the garden sets before our eyes? Those tortures of body, and that exceeding sorrow and heaviness of soul, even unto death? Those agonies and earnest prayers which extorted, as it were, even sweats of blood, and a most vehement importunity that the bitterness of that cup He was then about to drink might, if possible, pass from Him. These are all indications of anguish and grief of heart greater than can be expressed on this occasion.

By all these pangs our Lord hath convinced us at

* See Gospel for Wednesday next, Page 88.

how dear a price He thought our souls worth purchasing, and what obligations to love and gratitude lie upon them for whom He endured so much. By these He shews how highly displeasing to God sin is; and what horror and dread they are to look for, whose personal guilt and obstinacy render them objects of divine wrath and vengeance; since so heavy a load of sufferings was laid on the Son of His love, as almost weighed down a Person perfectly innocent, when He submitted to bear the sins of others; so heavy, that even He, Who declares the design of His coming into the world to have been that He might suffer, and drink that bitter cup, did yet upon the approach and taste of it desire, if it were possible, a release from it: in which desire because there are some difficulties, we shall do well to consider the probable reasons of that request, and to observe the manner and temper of it.

Now it is not by any means to be imagined, that this request proceeded from ignorance of His Father's purpose in relation to this affair of man's redemption; or from want of that constancy and resolution, which became the generous Undertaker of it; or from any abatement of His love toward the miserable wretches for whom He undertook it; or from rashness or inadvertency in that trying hour. Least of all could it proceed from any apprehension of His Father's anger at His Person; for He was then engaged in an act the most acceptable, the most beneficial, the highest instance of obedience; and that for which the Scripture declares Him to have been

highly rewarded, nay, to have performed it in a sense of His duty, and a certain prospect of such exceeding glory and reward : all these are interpretations that derogate from His honour, and argue a weakness, of which He was not capable. And therefore, if we will be just to His character, some other account must be given of this action, consistent with the rest of His discourses and behaviour, and no way unworthy of the Son of God.

Now, in order hereunto, it is necessary to remember, that this Son of God was also the Son of man ; that the human, no less than the divine nature had its part in our redemption ; that without an union of both, the scheme given us of it was altogether impracticable ; that in this union, notwithstanding, the powers and properties of each nature continued perfectly distinct, and were exerted or suspended, severally, as fit occasions offered. The consequence of all these remarks is, that, if we will avoid confusion, we must be careful in speaking of our Saviour's actions to ascribe them to that principle from whence they took their rise. For His miracles, His discovering the secrets of men's hearts, and the like, properly belong to the divine nature of Christ ; but His sufferings, His death, and every thing that bears the marks of infirmity, or submission, belong, peculiarly, to His human nature.

Then, since the efficacy of man's redemption depended upon a real conjunction of these two natures in one person, it was needful that clear and undoubted evidence should be given of them both in the actions and conduct of our Redeemer. But the

distinguishing characters of the human nature do not consist so much in any actions or sufferings proper to the body, as in the operation essential to; and affections inseparable from the human soul. And therefore, it was by no means sufficient to prove our Saviour, very man, that He took part of the same flesh and blood; unless it had also been demonstrated that He did partake, in like manner, of all the same inward passions and inclinations as are natural to mankind.

Now such particularly are strong desires of present ease and safety, fear of and aversion to pain and death, and whatever may greatly disturb, or quite dissolve our frame and constitution: for sense, as well as reason, is a part of human nature. The impressions of the former are no less interwoven with our original composition, than the dictates of the latter. And the weakness or corruption of human nature, as the case now stands with us, does not lie in our being very tenderly moved with objects of sense, and with the affections they raise in us, but in our proneness to be overborne by those affections, and to act against the rules of reason and religion. Infirmities these may be called, in comparison of the freedom and perfections of God and unbodied spirits; but they are such as our nature cannot be exempted from: and had sufferings and death been perfectly indifferent to our blessed Saviour, it is not to be conceived how He should have been our Saviour; for, upon these terms, He could not be like us in all things, sin only excepted; that is, He had not been truly man.

This seems to be sufficiently clear from the condition of Adam in the state of innocence; to whom, even then, death was threatened as a punishment. But every threatening supposes the matter offered to be something of which the party concerned hath a horror and dread, and upon that account which he himself highly concerned to avoid it. That these apprehensions in Adam were plainly antecedent to his fall, not any part of his fault, nor any consequence of it; and therefore, neither in it any just reflection upon the *Second Adam*, that He too was subject to the like fears and aversions. For God does not expect from any man, that he should when called to it have no unwillingness at all to suffer, but that he should conquer that unwillingness, rest in that appointment, and make God's choice his own. The more we renounce our own will upon such trying occasions, the greater is our virtue in complying with the divine will. And therefore our Lord's desires to be excused were no disparagement either of His obedience to God, or of His love to men. They were, in truth, a higher commendation of both: since, notwithstanding so tender a sense of what He was about to undergo, He gave Himself up to sufferings so harsh to human nature in general, so exceedingly bitter to Him in particular. Therefore, the more passionate His wishes were for a release, the more meritorious was His submission.

Now that submission is fully expressed in the form of words, in which He addressed His heavenly Father; begging that *if it were possible* (that is, if God saw fit, and found any other method of accomplish-

ing the great work of man's salvation equally wise and proper. He might be spared those agonies and tortures which were rushing upon Him like a mighty torrent, and had already begun to afflict His soul with grief inexpressible. But at the same time, if the divine Wisdom continued to require these, setting Himself to endure them with an immovable constancy of mind; *Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.* The former part of this petition is the voice of human nature, according to that principle of sense which God, Who implanted it in every man, cannot disapprove when duly regulated: the latter is the voice of the same human nature, according to that principle of reason and duty which sets bounds to our desires, checks and controls our passions and inclinations, and represents it as a becoming and necessary act of obedience to resign ourselves and all our affairs to God's better choice; nay, even to prefer His disposals of them and us before any desires or inclinations of our own in opposition to them. And this is all the perfection that human nature is capable of; all that God expects under any sort of difficulties and trials; to preserve such a temper of soul as that our sense shall be always in subjection to our reason; and both sense and reason ready to comply with the appointments of His good providence; and the terror of His commands. He Who was innocent itself did, and we without any reflection upon our virtue may fear, and feel and complain of, and pray against, and wish to be delivered from afflictions, and shame, and bodily sufferings; for religion does not intend to extinguish

our natural appetites, and make us cease to be men: but then we must always remember to do thus with that limitation and reserve, of which our blessed Master here left us a pattern; because religion's business is to reduce our natural appetites to a due subordination, and, by containing them within proper measures of obedience to Him Who gave them to us, to make and keep us good men.

Let us once more observe the success of this prayer. Now that was seen, not in removing the sufferings our Saviour deprecated, but in the assistance of an angel to strengthen Him under them. And we from hence must learn to acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in all our afflictions. We may not suppose that He hath put off the bowels of a Father, when He exercises our patience with calamities grievous to be borne. We should not presently give up those petitions for lost and rejected, which are not granted in the manner we desired. But we must think ourselves kindly dealt with, and our prayers answered to very good purpose, when He supports our spirits under those difficulties which flesh and blood are too feeble to encounter; and must conclude, that even events most unacceptable will, if the failing be not in ourselves, turn at last to better account than those more pleasing, but less profitable events, which if left to our own disposal would have been our portion. In short, we never determine so wisely as when we leave all entirely to God's choice, and our last and governing desire is that not ours, but our Father's *will may be done*.

Thus much may suffice to give us a probable ac-

count of our blessed Saviour's agonies and sorrows upon this occasion, and of the uses proper to be made of them. Those sorrows, it seems reasonable to conceive, might be highly aggravated by the clear knowledge of the horrors and wrath whereunto all, to whom these sufferings prove fruitless, are appointed; and from a foresight, withal, how vast the numbers of such will be, notwithstanding the misery He took upon Himself in order to prevent, if it had been possible, their eternal destruction. The afflicting pain of both which reflections we can no more apprehend; that we can the infinite tenderness and compassion of Him, Who may be presumed to have felt it in proportion to His own love for the souls He died to redeem.

If we now in the next place observe the blessed Jesus, apprehended by the officers who came to take Him; receiving that treacherous kiss of an abandoned disciple, (usually a token of friendship, but now a signal to the malice of His enemies) dragged by unhallowed hands to the palace of the high priest, there blind-folded and buffeted, mocked and spit upon; this sets before us on the one hand such barbarous and insulting cruelty, as must needs raise our indignation; on the other, such invincible meekness and constancy of mind, as infinitely surpass any instance in story, and justly excite our wonder, as well as furnish matter for our use and imitation.

For the more we reflect upon ourselves, and the resentments commonly provoked in us by injuries and indignities, the more cause we shall see to admire that patient silence of our great Master, which

to high affronts; so libellous revilings, and false accusation had not the power to break; in a silence, at which His very adversaries stood astonished; especially when sensible how very weak the charge against Him was, and what advantage He might easily have taken to expose and confound the wickedness and malice of those accursed wretches, who had the hardness to bring it on and against Himself. A severe reproof, indeed, this silence is, of that heat, and clamour, and outrageous bitterness, which too often do upon much less trying occasions transport those, who profess to make this Jesus their pattern; and yet even value themselves upon paying back calumnies and wrongs, insolent and spiteful treatment in the self-same kind. An excellent instruction too it is what deportment is proper for the injured and oppressed, when conscious of their own innocence, and committing themselves and the righteousness of their cause to the protection of a just God; and upon both accounts of exceeding use to be frequently meditated upon, that we may be enabled, by the help of this example, to master our passions, and preserve strict decency and temper, even when attacked by provocations which touch us in the most sensible part.

But still, this resolute silence notwithstanding, the same Jesus, both before the high priest, and afterwards before Pilate, hath demonstrated the force of that courage which truth and innocence inspire; for there He laid aside all reserve when questioned concerning His own character; and in express words bore a testimony which, it was designed, should, and,

He openly forgive, would draw condemnation of death upon himself. Of so little account was even life to him, of so little ought it to be to us, where the cause of God is concerned: indeed, wherever there is any duty of importance so great as to require (for many there are which do require) our firm adherence, and most perilous vindication.

Meanwhile, this contemplation of our meek but robust Saviour leads us to that of a frail and wavering apostle. And as the history hath done, so it may be profitable for us to join the remembrance of the servant's (alas! human) infirmities with that of the Master's divine perfections. The latter profits by shewing what we should be; of the former we may make our profit by seeing what we are; what we indeed are then most of all, when least suspecting that we are such. And historians then look upon St. Peter in the high priest's palace—St. Peter, not only an apostle, but one of that number singled out for a companion of our Lord's privacies, admitted to the honour of his most intimate friendship, and upon all occasions forthwith expressing his sense of these uncommon favours by all possible instances of gratitude, and love, and more than common zeal! He was drawn hither at this very time, most probably, from an affectionate concern for his Master. Here he resolutely ventured his person, notwithstanding his behaviour in the garden just before, when wounding the high priest's servant, must needs have exposed him, more than all the rest of his brethren, to the danger of being observed, and ill-treated by them.

who dealt so barbarously by his Lord : but, alas ! this St. Peter was presently so changed from what he had been, that terrified with the impertinence of an inquisitive servant he disowned, and denied Jesus; repeated that denial thrice ; repeated it after sufficient space for recollection ; and at last bound the lie upon his soul with solemn oaths, and dreadful imprecations.

Ah ! where was now that gallant faith, which made so glorious a confession of This Jesus being the *Christ, the Son of the living God* ? Where that eager courage, that did not fear to meet his Lord walking upon the sea ? Where that bold promise, that though *all should be offended, and leave that dear Lord in distress, yet would he never be offended* ^a ? Where that becoming resolution, *Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee in any wise* ^c ? Where all that fire and intrepidity, which but a very little while ago had singly engaged a whole band of armed men, in hope to rescue the Lord he now abjures ? What shall we say to such advantages, such warnings, such proofs of affection, such boasted firmness of mind, such desperate attempts, all lost and forgotten; upon the silly surmises of a servant or two, without any formal accusation brought, without any hand laid on him ? What two men ever differed more from one another, than this man in an hour or two differed from himself ? from what himself had oft been proved, and had continued all along, till that very hour or two ? from what he hoped, and believed

^a St. Matt. xvi. 16.

^b Ibid. xxvi. 33.

^c Ibid. xxvi. 35.

he should, and no doubt intended fully to continue, to the last moment of his life?

Yet so sudden, so prodigious an alteration our Lord foretold and permitted; and such He thought fit we should be acquainted there was in this great man. Wisely to be sure; as for other reasons, so particularly for these; that this example might effectually convince us how frail even the best are, how little masters of their own passions, how unfit to undertake for themselves, even when their desires of doing well are most fervent, and their resolutions most sincere. In short, how vain all confidence in our own strength and virtue must needs be, which by tempting us to imagine we are something provokes God to withdraw His grace (the necessity whereof we do not then sufficiently apprehend) and so by woeful experience makes us feel that in truth we are nothing.

This fall of St. Peter, however, as it ought to be applied for a necessary mortification of our vanity, so may it likewise serve us for a support under our frailties and temptations. But then this is a comfort, which can be regularly administered to none, except to them who are careful to be like him in that repentance, whereof we have also an account in the Scripture now under consideration: for as his fault was sudden and surprising, so was his recovery speedy and effectual. Long it was not before he was awakened into recollection, by a pitying look of his injured Master, and the crowing of the cock. Immediately upon the reflection he forsook the guilty scene of his foul offence, sought a convenient place for re-

tired thoughts, melted away in tears for the horror of his crime, and from henceforward became again the same faithful, affectionate, undaunted St. Peter he had been before. The book of Acts informs us at large, what noble reparation he afterwards made for this breach of faith: how vigorous and bold he was in preaching; how forward and even joyful in suffering for the gospel of his once denied Lord. And the same Jesus, Who foretold by what means he should offend, did shortly after let him understand by *what death he should glorify God*¹. Now all these are testimonies of greater value, because they were the long and constant practice of a settled faith, the course of many years, the habit and the sense of the man: whereas his crime, though exceeding great, was but of short continuance; the effect of fear and infirmity in great measure; and not so much the act of the man, as the violence of passions and temptations which had then almost unmanned him.

The same methods must we be sure to follow, when it shall please God to suffer any grievous temptation to overtake us. We must upon the first sense of our fault burst through, and break our snare; afflict our souls with a sorrow, that may carry some proportion to the sad occasion of it; not tarry a moment in the way of temptation; never look back upon our misdemeanours without a just abhorrence; and above all use our utmost diligence to bring honour to virtue and religion by our future practice. 'Tis true, indeed, we cannot do all, or any part of this, without

¹ John xxi. 19.

the assistance of divine grace. 'Tis that alone can strengthen them that stand; 'tis that alone must raise up them that fall*. But the same Jesus, Who turned upon Pêter, and brought him back to himself, will not leave us to perish in our folly; but will find out some happy, some awakening dispensation; which, provided we be as careful as Peter was to observe it, to strike in with, and to improve it, will convert even our temptations, and past sins to His glory, and our own profit. The same powerful Intercessor prays for every sincere, though feeble servant, that *his faith fail not*. But they that are sincere should remember they are feeble too; and not, with this apostle, sleep in the hour of danger; but watch and pray: watch constantly, pray fervently, that they enter not into temptation; as knowing by this example, and feeling by their own experience, that the *willingness of the spirit* is not preservative sufficient against the *wickedness of the flesh*.

TUESDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

THE EPISTLE.

ISAIAH L. 5.

Paraphrase.

5 The Lord God hath 5 God hath chosen Me for
opened Mine ear, and I His servant, and instructed Me

* Luke xxii. 61.

was not rebellious; neither turned away back.

6 I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.

7 For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me? let us stand together: who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me.

9 Behold, the Lord God will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

10 Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of

My command, which I readily undertook, notwithstanding I knew how ill it would be received.

6 I submitted to all manner of contumelious usage, and was not discouraged by it.

7 For God, I know, will support Me, so that the malice of My enemies shall not prevail to My destruction. Therefore I continue impenetrable to their cruelty and scorn, as assured that I shall not be put to shame.

8 He will plead My cause, and vindicate My innocence, so that I dare confidently challenge all that speak or think ill of Me to come forth and make good their charge.

9 God will stand by Me in this trial I put Myself upon: and all My accusers shall fail and fret away.

10 If among so great a number of slanderers and scorners, there be found some

his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

for who fear God, and hearken to His messenger; if these be under grievous troubles, and have no comfort, let not their afflictions drive them to despair; but (after My example) put them upon a firm dependance on the God they serve, for protection and deliverance.

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

11 But as for you who think to secure yourselves by wicked means, go on in your vain projects: but know, that the end of all your short imaginary satisfaction shall be to perish in misery and lasting grief.

COMMENT.

THIS portion of Scripture contains so exact a description of the barbarous indignities our blessed Saviour suffered, and of His meek deportment under them, as looks more like a historical narration of facts already past, than a prediction of events then seven hundred years to come. Had Isaiah been present at the high-priest's palace and the judgment-hall, what fuller representation could he, what indeed do the evangelists themselves give, more punctual than that which the Holy Ghost hath here inspired

him with? They, who attend to the connexion of this with the chapter next before, will see reason sufficient to conclude, that the prophet in both personates the Messiah. And they, who compare the account here with that of our Lord's passion in the New Testament, must be utterly blind, or extremely perverse, if they can any longer suffer themselves to doubt whether Jesus of Nazareth were that Messiah.

Since, then, this prophecy is so plain as to ask no enlargement, either for the interpreting, or the applying it; we may very well join it with the Gospel of the day, as partly introductory, and partly parallel to it. The affronts and injuries committed upon our blessed Saviour at the palace of the high-priest make the subject of this Epistle; which leads Him, as it were, from the garden, through all the painful steps of rudeness, and violence, insult, and scorn, and reproach, till it sets Him at Pilate's bar: there the gospel takes Him up, and carries Him on to crucifixion and death. So that both together proceeding on so regular a method, and making one continued relation, I choose to treat upon them together; not forgetting in the meanwhile some particulars, which Isaiah here suggests proper matter for, and fit to be observed as inferences well suited for the close of the whole. Such are,

1. The expedience of that Saviour, Who came to expiate for the sins of the world, not only dying as a sacrifice, but prefacing that death with all the most aggravating circumstances of shame, and scorn, and detestation.
2. The use and comfort which these sufferings of

our blessed Lord may be of to good men, when under any extremity of affliction or disgrace, ver. 7. to 11.

13. The disappointment, and guilt, and severe punishment, of our great Master's murderers and persecutors; and, in proportion, of all who depend altogether upon means for compassing their design: especially if, as, in the case before us, those means or designs be (both, or either, of them) wicked. Thus much I gather from ver. 7, 8, 9, 11.

Such is the improvement of the passage at hand, obvious to every reader; and all exemplified in the sufferings and death of our dear Redeemer, to which we will now proceed.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. MARK XV.

AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing. And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against Thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. Next as that feast he released unto them one prisoner,

whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? (For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy.) But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews. And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshipped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexan-

dan and Rufus, to bear His cross. And they bring Him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not. And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And with Him they crucified two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railled on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, Thou That destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, He calleth Elias. And one ran and filled a sponge

full of vinegar, and put it upon a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly This man was the Son of God.

COMMENT.

If ever suffering innocence and injured virtue had power to move compassion, and melt us into tears; if ever the barbarity and insolence of base and wicked men could provoke our just indignation and abhorrence; let it appear at this time—at this, I say, the service whereof presents us with a scene of the blackest villainy, that ever malicious and enraged people were guilty of; and at the same time too with the brightest, the most unspotted virtue, the meekest, the most invincible patience, that ever suffered in human flesh. Had some very vile impostor been exposed, abused, tormented, as the evangelists relate; yet the cruelty even to such a man would have been thought great, and the foulness of his guilt would scarcely have extinguished all our pity. But when a Person was so ill treated, Whose only message into the world was to lead men into the truth, Who was Himself *The Way, The Truth, and The Life* :

wild can be so inhuman, as not to resent it with a quick and tender sense of what He endured, and with the greatest detestation of those merciless, malicious wretches that inflicted it upon Him? All this, I say, is due to our Lord's innocence and injured virtue; but when we consider farther, that those sufferings had a secret end, unseen to the beholders of them at that time; that they were directed and assigned by Almighty God to the most glorious purposes of redeeming mankind from sin and hell, and making this just and holy Person a sacrifice and atonement for the whole world; when we observe that He suffered for us, in our stead, and for our unspeakable benefit; then pity is too low, too cold a passion; but it is necessary we should be transported with wonder, and inflamed with gratitude and love.

The dying for us, though in all those alleviating circumstances that might have softened death, and made it the most easy and tolerable that it could be made, is what most of us, who are fond of life for the mere sake of living, have reason to magnify as an unparalleled instance of kindness. But to submit to all those aggravations, which add to the terrors of dying, and are infinitely more grievous than the thing itself, shews plainly, that there was nothing thought too much for compassing our happiness, and that His kindness and zeal for our redemption knew no bounds: nay, which is yet more, this Person was not under any natural necessity of dying, as we all are; but God, blessed from all eternity, God, above the reach of suffering, or pain, or corruption: and yet blessed and impassible as He was, He made that His choice,

which could not be His fate. . . He took a body capable of misery and death, and He took it on purpose that He might suffer and die in it ; so free, so amazing was this goodness ; so little did the Eternal Father spare His own Son ; so far was the Son from sparing Himself for us.

To have His blood set to sale at a price, and that but a very low and poor one too ; that blood, which was a purchase more than equivalent to the whole world, rated at *thirty pieces of silver* ; to be betrayed and sold by one of His own servants, His friend and constant companion ; one who was honoured with the dignity of an apostle, with the power of working miracles, with a commission of preaching His gospel, and (to free him from the temptation of such base avarice) was intrusted with the bag, and made distributor of the stores of his Master ; to be assaulted with swords and staves, and apprehended as a common robber and pest of mankind ; to be haled from one high priest to another, and there blindfolded, spit upon, buffeted, and insulted over ; to be exposed to the mercenary tongues of false witnesses, and in the midst of all this distress left alone, not one friend, not one disciple to stand by Him ; but forsaken by the rest, and solemnly disowned, and denied by the chief of them ; to be dragged from one judgment-seat to another, and when neither Pilate nor Herod could find any fault in Him, yet to have a most unjust sentence of death pronounced against Him ; pronounced by that very mouth, which at the same instant was so overpowered with the force of truth, as to attest and proclaim His innocence, and so con-

descent itself of iniquity and cowardice; to have a known robber and murderer, one who stood convicted of sedition and blood, preferred before Him, and so be made a sacrifice to the rage and implacable envy of a tumultuous rabble: these are all of them circumstances of such horror, and insolence, and cruelty as never met together before. They render this a case without a parallel; a death beyond example, a wickedness beyond expression: each of them would very well bear, each of them very well deserve such an enlargement, as must needs be very moving, very amazing. They are a subject too large for a discourse; a subject fit indeed to take up the greatest part of our lives: therefore, I will only fix upon some very few particulars at present, and so represent these to my reader's consideration, as to give him a hint how he ought to proceed in the rest: that is, first, to set forth the things themselves; and secondly, to shew what profitable and pious reflections they ought to raise in our minds.

The crimes alleged against Jesus before the high priests were too false or too frivolous to bear any weight: and all the evidence that they had packed against Him was found insufficient to take away His life. In all which we may observe a particular providence. For it being foretold that the Messiah should be crucified, if He had died by the hands of the Jews or for any offences against their law, this could not have been accomplished; because crucifixion was not a Jewish, but a Roman punishment. When therefore He had acquitted Himself before their

council, they pursue Him with a fresh accusation, bring Him before the governor, and there charge Him with treason against Caesar in making Himself a King. This Pilate soon discovered to be merely the effect of envy and spite: but, however, not daring to provoke the people by an act of justice that might call his loyalty and zeal for Caesar into question, he yielded to their clamours, and gave command, that the Prisoner should be crucified according to their desire. This punishment, as will appear by and by, was enough, one would think, to gratify the most inveterate malice: but, however, to make the pomp of it the greater, and give their rage its full scope, they first divert themselves with His misery, and barbarously insult over their supposed malefactor. *The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band, and they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews: and they spit upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head.* (Ver. 16, 17, 18, 19.) Inhuman wretches! thus to revel and sport with a condemned man, to triumph in his death, and preface it with so much pageantry and derision! This is a barbarity unknown even to those who deal in blood; and undergoing the law is allowed satisfaction even for the most guilty. But so God was pleased at that time to suffer it, that they should behave themselves in a manner most unbecoming the character of soldiers and Romans, to fill up the mea-

sure of their iniquities, and the bitterness of that cup which His Son was appointed to drink.

It was requisite, that sin should be exposed every way that was possible: and therefore He, Who had no sin of His own, but took ours upon Himself, must suffer all that was any way due to it, all that could be consistent with His nature to suffer. The King of heaven and earth was therefore arrayed in purple, and made a spectacle to the people, as if He had pretended to a royalty which belonged not to Him. A mock crown and sceptre is given Him, and obeisance made to Him in jest and wantonness, that He might be the gazing and the laughing-stock of the beholders; royal salutations were uttered, seconded by spittings in His face, and His sceptre was broken about His head, to render Him more ridiculous and contemptible. Malice was then let loose, and all the instruments of hell set on work, to make the injury more black and detestable. This was Satan's *hour*, and the *power of darkness*; and it appeared to be so by such unrelenting cruelties as could never have been exercised, had not the committers of them been carried beyond the common corruptions of nature, and for that time ceased to be men. For though the nature of government and civil constitutions requires great severities upon such as are found, or supposed to have grievously offended; yet no laws pretend to countenance barbarity and insolence; and we can scarce forbid ourselves pitying the worst of criminals. But here was a Person declared wholly blameless; none of the courts before whom He stood could convict Him of the least fault; the

very judge, who partially condemned Him, washed his hands publicly, and disclaimed the having any thing to do in taking Him off; and yet this Just Man found no pity, but all possible industry was used to add to His torment, and to render Him more vile and odious, and more unworthy of compassion.

But though insolence and cruelty be detestable upon all occasions, and more so still to the innocent and injured, yet is there something of difference, with regard to the dignity of the person against whom it is exercised; and the more exalted his character is, the more cutting it is in him that endures, and the more villainous in them that commit it. Our own nation hath seen (and wee unto us that we have seen) an excellent prince inhumanly exposed, murdered with wicked triumph; and all good men must needs look back upon that fact with grief and horror, and great indignation. But alas! though this were such a wickedness as hath seldom been seen under the sun; yet how vastly short does it come of the affronts and indignities put upon our blessed Lord? The best and holiest of the sons of men are not pure in His sight; nor ought to be compared with His innocence, even as *man*; and the greatest and most glorious monarchs are yet infinitely more beneath His *Divine* majesty and perfections. Yet even this unblemished Virtue, even this almighty King suffered the rudeness and insults of a blind and enraged multitude. He permitted Himself to be made, as it was written of Him long before, *A worm and no man, a very scorn of men; and the outcast of the people; all*

they that said *He designed Him to scorn*. They entertained themselves with reproaching and ridiculing Him; and, when they had ended this insolent farce, they proceeded to act the last part of their interlarded tragedy, and resolved to glut their fury with His blood. Yet still they proceed to observe their former method of giving scoffs and stripes together; they twisted His soul, as well as bruise His body. For, after they had mocked Him, they led Him away to crucifixion: a death, the most dreadful of all others, both for the shame and for the pain of it.

First, Crucifixion was a death full of shame. It was so scandalous, that it was inflicted as the last mark of detestation upon the vilest of people; it was peculiar to the meanest condition, and to the most heinous offences. It was the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided they were slaves too. But otherwise if they were free, and had the privileges of the city of Rome; this was then thought a prostitution of that honour, and too infamous a penalty for such an one, let his misdemeanor have been what it would. Accordingly we see what companions our Saviour had in His death, how *He was numbered amongst the worst of transgressors*, and (according to the prophet) *made His grave with the wicked*. Nay, so very odious and abominable was this punishment, that, when they had a mind to brand the memory of any very flagitious people, traitors to the state, and common enemies to mankind, we are told, that they thought it a most effectual way to fix an indelible infamy upon a person, to expose him to this death. And so it was.

them, to hang their pictures, and to bury
 those in effigy, whom they could not save as their
 own persons. Herein then we perceive the unparallel-
 able condescension of our blessed Saviour, Who did
 not only vouchsafe to die, but did not disdain the
 most ignominious death, that the malice and cruelty
 of His enemies could inflict; to take upon Him the
 form of the meanest servant, and to become the
 blackest criminal. That He became obedient unto
 death, was a most astonishing instance of humility; but
 to stoop so very low as the death of the cross, this
 was to make Himself of no reputation indeed.
 Secondly, This death was terrible above others;
 not only for the scandal and disgrace, but for the
 extreme pain and torture of it. And of this the only
 manner is enough to convince us. For the form of
 a cross being that of two posts cutting one another
 at right angles; on that which stood upright the
 body was fastened by nailing the feet to it, and on
 the other transverse piece by nailing the hands on
 each side, the pain whereof must needs be most
 acute, because these parts of the body, being the
 instruments of action and motion, are provided by
 nature with a much greater quantity of nerves than
 others have occasion for. And since all sensation
 is performed by the spirits in these nerves, where so-
 ever they abound, the sense must needs in propor-
 tion be more quick and tender. And in this case we
 are to consider, not only the hands and feet were
 pierced through with iron pins, (and these so large,
 that Thomas required for his conviction to thrust his
 finger into the print of them) but the weight of the

whole body hanging upon those fastenings, and these tormenting distortions of the limbs, which the psalmist signified, when, speaking in the person of our Saviour, he complains, *They pierced My hands and My feet, I may tell all My bones*^k. If the bitterness of this pain had been in any degree compensated by its shortness, it had yet been more tolerable. But alas! it was a very slow and lingering, as well as an exceeding sharp death. For, though the misery was so great, yet none of the vitals were immediately affected; but the body continued thus stretched out, till excess of anguish had by degrees quite exhausted the spirit, and driven out the soul. Our blessed Saviour, we are told expressly, continued thus three long hours in languishings, and thirsts, and leisurely pangs of approaching death; and, at last, with strong cries and groans, gave up the ghost.

What a tedious torment is this in comparison of those executions that malefactors commonly undergo where the seat of life is immediately assaulted, and the sense of pain can be but very short? The Romans themselves, who used this punishment, were frequently so compassionate as to strangle the party first, and content themselves with exposing the dead body upon the cross. But in our Saviour's case there was no relenting, no remains of humanity for His ease and relief. Death attacked Him in its most frightful shape, and wreaked its utmost spite upon Him. The length of His misery was so far from being unusual, that the governor wondered to

^k Psal. xxiii. 17.

hear in the evening, that He was dead so soon. The soldiers also, who came to take the bodies down from the cross, found the two companions of His shame still struggling for life. But to us it seemed so strange, that His spirit should be so much sooner wasted, who knew what variety of miseries He passed through to it. The wondrous and unspeakable agony in the garden, the violence of the Jews, the buffeting of the servants, the being harassed and dragged from one court of judicature to another, the thorny crown, and merciless scourges, those deep furrows which the barbarous plowmen cut in His back—all these, I say, and (which was yet worse than all these) that inconceivable anguish and sad anxiety of heart, which before any outward violence was offered, to Him did with its own weight depress His soul, and make it exceeding sorrowful and heavy, even unto death—all conspired to spend His natural strength, and force His life away. Nature was quite worn out; and what was wanting in length of time upon the cross, had been supplied another way, many other ways; many other ways indeed, to us unknown. For certainly never any person died with such variety, such bitterness of torments, of studied malicious torments. Never any was sensible of such exquisite misery, nor had cause to utter such a doleful complaint as He. Who, though the Son of God, felt Himself so destitute of consolation and support as to cry out, with a passion that looked almost like despair, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* Such were the sufferings of our dying Redeemer; such, and infinitely greater than it is possible for me

to express, on any man, to be conceived. But so much of
 them as we are capable of apprehending will, if duly
 considered, be of great use to us. Particularly, it
 may be very proper on this occasion, as hath this day
 been already intimated, to observe,
 1st The expedience of that Saviour, Who
 came to expiate the sins of mankind, dying under all
 the most aggravating circumstances of shame, and
 scorn, and detestation. This no doubt was done, as
 I hinted before, to expose the heinousness of sin; to
 prove how just an object it is of the wrath of God,
 how vilely it degrades the committers of it; and that
 no disgrace or punishment can be too great for such;
 all which we see exemplified in Him, Who only stood
 in the place of sinners, and yet was loaded with all
 the sufferings and indignities capable of being under-
 gone by a Person perfectly innocent; and by the hu-
 man united to the Divine nature.
 2^d So was it expedient too for manifesting the tender-
 ness of His love, the incomparable greatness of His
 humility and condescension, and His boundless gene-
 rosity and zeal for accomplishing the noble design He
 came about; a zeal, which did not disdain even the
 most difficult terms of working out the salvation of
 souls. So expedient was it, again, for instructing us
 in the nature of the like reproaches and sufferings:
 since this example teaches us that we are not to mea-
 sure men's virtue, or the state of their souls with re-
 gard to the favour of God and another world, by such
 marks as these; since the Son of His love endured
 these without forfeiting the one, or staining the other.
 And so it was, lastly, for setting us an example of

meekness, and patience, and forgiveness, of the wicked instruments of such inhuman treatment; if at any time it shall be permitted to befall us.

2. The next particular, that is, concerning the use and comfort which our Lord's sufferings may bring to good men in affliction, hath been already spoken to in the Comment upon the Epistle for Sunday last.

3. The third is therefore that which I choose at present to insist upon; the disappointment, I add, and guilt of our great Master's murderers and persecutors; and, in proportion, of all who depended upon human force and subtlety for the compassing of wicked designs. And here who can sufficiently admire the wisdom of Almighty God, Who thus ordered the great work of man's redemption, in despite of all the malice and subtlety of the devil, and his wicked instruments to the contrary? the envy and spite of the chief priests and pharisees, the stink and fury of the common people, the rage and intolerance of the soldiers, the profligate consciences of false witnesses, the treachery and avarice of one of Christ's own disciples, the timorousness of a corrupt and time-serving judge, the barbarity of those who derided, and scourged, and crucified Him, and insulted over His dying agonies and pains:—all these were made use of by the enemy of mankind to destroy Jesus, and to overthrow His kingdom, and to root out His name, and all honour for it from among men; and yet see how vain all these attempts were in the event! They were overruled by Providence, so as to bring about those very purposes which the actors, and the evil

spirit who set those engines at work laboured to defeat. They, every one, conspired to render the matter more glorious, more uniform, more exactly conformable to the original scheme and design marked out for it; and each contributed to finish that work, which some of them knew not of, which others opposed, which none of them in the least intended. This was the only way they could think of for ruining the reputation of Jesus, and blotting out the remembrance of His miracles and His doctrine; and yet, on reality, it was the only way by which the gospel could be established beyond all contradiction, and to all future ages; for had not these men been so exceedingly, so perversely barbarous and wicked, This holy Teacher, This innocent Liver, This general Benefactor to wretches in distress, could never have been taken off by so ignominious a death. Had He not been put to such a death, He could not have suffered the shame and torment which the Divine Justice required; as a satisfaction for the sins of men; had not the proceedings against Him been injurious and unreasonable, that death had not had the merit of a sacrifice, and expiation for the guilty whose persons He bore; had not the innocent Jesus thus died, the people of this world had not been judged; but that was the devil's condemnation in the present case, that he had nothing in the Person against Whom he exercised such cruelty. In a word, had He not died, He had not conquered death, nor led captivity captive. For St. Paul tells us expressly, that the Son of God was made like unto us, and took a mortal nature upon Him, that by death He might destroy him that had the power

of death, even the devil¹, and release them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Thus did the wicked one fall into his own snare, and in the same net, that he hid privily, was his own soul taken; his devices returned upon his own head, and his mischiefs fell upon his own pate². So vain and blind are all the counsels of men, so impotent all the cunning and subtlety of hell itself, when they undertake to fight against God. And (which was eminently visible in the death of our blessed Saviour) the prophecies they fulfilled to a tittle; while they did all in their power to evacuate them; the divine counsels which they unawares accomplished; and the quite contrary ends they served to what they hoped and laboured to have done; though it be the most glorious, the most conspicuous, yet is far from being the only instance of a wonderful, wise, and Almighty Providence bringing good out of evil, and excellent and most beneficial events out of most unlikely, most ungodly, most malicious intentions. This every diligent observer will find instances of, frequent enough to convince any thinking man that, how casual soever things at first sight may appear, there is *One that ruleth over all, and worketh after the counsel of His Own will*³. Therefore, how successful or formidable soever the enemies of truth and goodness may seem in our eyes, yet they cannot bind the hands, nor cross the purposes of the great Governor of the world. He will assert His own honour, and do right to His

¹ Heb. ii. 14, 15.

² Psal. ix. 15. vii. 6.

³ Eph. i. 11.

suffering and injured servants; and even them, when the wicked think themselves most secure, will show them their folly, and blast them with the breath of His displeasure.

Blessed, therefore, be His wise and watchful Providence, which thus consults His own honour, and the good of His beloved ones by dark and mysterious ways! Blessed be that admirable management and skill, which turns even the obstinacy of wicked men, and their attempts against religion, into means of protecting and securing it! Blessed for ever be that amazing goodness, which turned an unexampled murder into a most precious sacrifice; transformed the ignominy of the cross into a banner of honour and triumph; and, when the princes and rulers, with Herod and Pontius Pilate, were gathered against Him and His Christ^o, looked down from heaven with scorn, and had them in derision; put a hook in their nose, and a bridle in their lips; and, while they gratified their own implacable malice, suffered that malice to suggest no other things to them, than what Himself had long ago determined, and His prophets foretold, should be so done! Blessed be that wisdom, which thus made sin instrumental to destroy sin; which of the blood shed by wicked hands opened a fountain to wash away uncleanness, and appointed the holy Jesus, treated as a vile malefactor, for a prince and Saviour, nay, for the only, the efficacious Author of eternal salvation, to all that sincerely believe and obey Him! Blessed, *lastly*, be

to Him who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

^o Acts iv. 26, 27. Psal. ii. 4.

that truth, which thus preserved an exact harmony between the law and the gospel, the prophecies, and their respective accomplishments, which crowned the shadows of the Levitical dispensation with their proper substance, which provided a *Lamb Which did indeed take away the sins of the world*; and, to conclude, which suffered no one circumstance to be wanting in His death that could be necessary to make good the promises, or satisfy the justice, or convince men of the love and goodness of God!

WEDNESDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

THE EPISTLE.

HEB. ix. 16.

16 Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Paraphrase.

16 I had said, that the promise of eternal inheritance was received by means of death. And this is agreeable to the condition of all other inheritances, conveyed by will, and of all covenants ratified with blood.

17 While the deviser lives he may alter his will, and therefore his death must be proved, to give the will force. And in covenants, till the blood was shed, no bargain was struck.

18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood: 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens

18 The necessity of this blood-shedding. God plainly signified in the rites, by which the former (the Levitical) covenant was made. Exod. xxiv.

22 Some few things excepted, as metals, which were purified by fire, and clothes by water. See Numb. xxxi. 23. Ley. xvi. 28. The rest were purified by being sprinkled with blood.

23 Thus did men gain access to that sanctuary, which was a type of heaven; but to

HEB. IX. 16.

Paraphrase

should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

procure them admittance into heaven itself is nobler blood (even that of Christ) was necessary.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

26 For, since His appearing before God on our behalf, as a consequence of shedding His blood; had He often entered into the heavenly sanctuary (as the high-priest did into the earthly one) He must have died often in order to each entrance.

27 But in this regard too He was like other men, who die but once.

28 At His first appearance He was our sacrifice for sin,

HEB. ix. 16.

Paraphrase.

many, and unto them
that look for Him shall He
appear the second time
without sin, unto salva-
tion.

but at His second He shall
come without any such offer-
ing, to bestow that salvation,
which the sacrifice of Himself
at His first coming purchased
for all that trust in, and expect
it from Him.

COMMENT.

THE apostle had said in the verse next before, that Christ is the *Mediator of the New Testament*; that by means of death they which are called might receive remission of sins, and the promise of eternal inheritance. He proceeds here to shew the necessity of Christ's death in order to that purpose. The nature of which argument it may be convenient to illustrate, according to the two-fold sense of the original word, as it is capable of being rendered *a testament*, or *a covenant*.

If we take it in the former signification; our dying Redeemer is the Testator; the legacy or inheritance bequeathed to us is immortality in heaven! expressed thus by Himself, *Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me*: and the title we have to this happiness is that death of His, which opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. By this import of the word is intimated

John xvii. 24. *that they may be with Me, and may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me*.

to us the freedom of the gift: but then our duty is implied in it likewise; it being a known rule in all testamentary laws, that he who takes the benefit of any legacy does, by that very act, oblige himself to, and become answerable for all the conditions, upon which it pleased the deceased that such benefit should be suspended. And in this latitude the expression comes very little short of that more usual notion of the original word, which comes next to be considered — that of a *covenant*.

Thus, it is evident, we must understand it at the 20th verse here; and indeed in most places where the apostles and evangelists have thought fit to make use of it. Nor is this, I conceive, any incommode sense even of the 16th and 17th verses: which yet do more than any other passage incline to that other acceptation of a testament, strictly so called. For the method of making covenants heretofore is known, almost every where, to have been by slaying of beasts: a significant ceremony, implying a sort of confession, that the contractors deserved to be, and an execration or wish that they might be treated by Divine Vengeance as those beasts then were, in case they proved false to the compacts ratified between them in so solemn a manner.

With like formalities the author of this Epistle does here put the Hebrews in mind, that the covenant made with their ancestors by the law of Moses was established. The design of God no doubt was, on that occasion too, to awaken in them a sense of the death due to all who should presume to violate it. Thus far, as the rite, so the meaning of it was common

to that, with all other covenants. But it had besides a peculiar import, by which the parties indenting with God were given to understand, that He would not remit sins without a vicarious death; and that those beasts, then slain in sacrifice, were figures of a death to be suffered, and of blood to be shed for the ransom of their souls; as well as implications of the punishments they had incurred, and must otherwise have endured, in their own persons.

But the apostle puts this difference between the new or evangelical, and all other covenants; that although God still continued to use the same method of ratifying with blood, yet He did not make use of the same blood. There, it was the blood of goats and bulves; here, the blood of His own Son, made man, that intervened. A commutation nobler, in proportion as the benefits contracted for were better. But still the rule held true; that *without shedding of blood is no remission*. (Ver. 22.) The Mediator therefore must die; or no covenant could be struck. Consequently, the necessity of dying to give effect to this contract being equal with that of rendering a plant well valid; (matters in neither case being immutably fixed till such death be over) I apprehend not any violence done either to the apostle's argument, or to the text itself by keeping to the more common signification of the word; and by *testament*, and *testator*, (ver. 16, 17.) understanding a covenant, and the person whose death is made the means of ratifying that covenant. The reason of this difference in the instrument of confirming the new covenant we have at the 28th

verse: *It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* By the former some understand the levitical; by the latter, the Gospel economy: others, the persons belonging to each of these—the synagogue, and the church. But I presume no interpretation will better suit the design of the argument, and the intent of those other passages where the like expression occurs, than that of the Jewish tabernacle or sanctuary, and heaven itself.

There lies, indeed, one difficulty against this exposition: for it seems harsh to say that heaven, the region and source of all purity, should itself either need, or receive cleansing or purification from any sacrifice whatsoever. But this will be removed, if we attend to the true intent of the word with regard to the tabernacle and sanctuary. Now these, and all the utensils belonging to them were consecrated in the most solemn manner, and could not be rendered more holy by the frequent sprinklings of the blood of the sacrifices. The blemishes then and stains done away by them were the impurities, not of the place, but of the persons approaching it; and the altar and sanctuary were then said to be purified, when the priest and people were put in a due legal capacity of holding communion with Almighty God there. By parity of reason, and in allusion to those types, heaven may be thought *purified* (according to the levitical construction of the word) when the bodies and souls of men, designed to approach God there, are washed from the pollution of their sins,

which incapacitated them for that blessed dwelling; when these are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and so qualified for being brought into the presence of Him Who accepts them in the Beloved. This is a privilege which He only could confer; a cleansing which no other sacrifice ever did, ever could effect. A point at large asserted in the Scriptures which are very fully read to us at and about this season; and formerly assigned by me to this time, as most proper for taking it into consideration.

Now, in this point there are two parts contained, *first*, the insufficiency of the legal, and *then*, the perfection and efficacy of the evangelical sacrifice. I shall say somewhat concerning each of these, with all convenient brevity and plainness.

1. *First*, for the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices. The Epistle contains sundry arguments, which are very clear and full proofs of it. In the *seventh* chapter, by shewing that the law is changed, by reason of its being defective in this very respect; and by grounding this inference upon those passages of the Old Testament which speak of the Messiah, not only as a priest more excellent than any other, but as a priest descended of a tribe, none of which had any right to minister in holy things; and of an order altogether distinct from, and foreign to the constitution of the levitical economy. Observe the author's reasoning: *If perfection were by the levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law) what farther need was there, that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being*

changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet for more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another Priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God^a.

He proves it again, in the eighth chapter^r; from the forgiveness of sins, and the more complete knowledge of God and man's duty, being by their own prophets foretold as blessings properly belonging to a new covenant, which God in its proper season promised to make with them. And the consequence he draws from hence is, that God *finds fault with, and abolishes the old; that, if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.* (Ver. 8, 7.) And thus he establishes the truth of what he had affirmed just before, that Christ hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Ver. 6.) So

^a Heb. vii. 11—19.

^r Heb. viii. 8—12.

agreeable to all this to the observation of St. Paul elsewhere, that if *righteousness had come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain* : i. e. upon this supposition, there was no manner of need for that death : and all the provision for pardon made by it, and all the weight laid upon it end in the most superfluous, the most absurd contrivance that ever was in the world.

In this *ninth*; and at the beginning of the *tenth* chapter the apostle produces a farther evidence of the insufficiency of those legal sacrifices ; particularly of that most solemn one in the great day of atonement ; in that they were by express order frequently repeated. Some of them made a part of the daily worship ; others had their stated returns upon particular days and occasions. The priests (he urges) *went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God ; but into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people* : from whence he draws the following inference—that *the law can never with those sacrifices, which are offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not (the meaning is, undoubtedly they would) have ceased to be offered ? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins : but in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year* . This rendered them not so properly cures, as convictions of guilt, and representations, rather than remedies of the sinner's danger. Each repetition con-

* Gal. ii. 21.

† Heb. ix. 6.

‡ Ibid. x. 1, 2, 3.

fessed the impotence of the former act, and reproached it with weakness that ordinance which left man under a necessity of fresh expiations. Nor will it suffice to answer, (as the Jews do upon this occasion) that, where the sins themselves are repeated, it is needed that the propitiations for them should be so too. For the certain character of a perfect sacrifice is to be of inherent and eternal efficacy; not limited to times; not invalidated by the return of the diseases; not to be offered, but only to be applied anew by such acts of faith and contrition, as the party's infirmities or relapses shall render expedient for making that effectual to him in particular, whose efficacy, in itself and generally speaking, is perpetual.

Thus are the legal sacrifices convicted of disability; and the other branch of the matter now before us, the sufficiency of the evangelical sacrifice, is at the same time established by having those very perfections attributed to it, which are so justly denied to the legal when set in opposition to it. For to this purpose it is that so much care is taken for showing our Lord's to be an endless priesthood: that the blood which He shed in this affair as our Mediator, is styled *the blood of the everlasting covenant*; that He is said to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself *in these last days, and in the end of the world*; (that is in this dispensation* to which no other shall, because no better can succeed) that He shall indeed come again, but not as He did before, not to be slain

* Heb. xiii. 20. i. 2.

† Ibid. ix. 25, 26.

* See Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospel, Vol. K. Comment on Christmas Day.

(that is not in the quality of a *sine-offering*) for us any more; but without sin, without any such propitiatory sacrifice, *unto salvation*; to bestow the blessings purchased at His first coming; not then a Redeemer, but the rewarder of persons already completely redeemed. Hence so much stress is laid upon this offering being not made often, because the force of it is so far above needing any repetition: He by His precious blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He hath appeared once to take away sin, and was once offered to bear the sins of many. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The merit and influence of this oblation was not confined to the age in which it was made, but had a retrospect to generations long since past and gone; and supplied the deficiencies of former dispensations. For therefore is Christ the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. And it looks forward to all generations yet unborn; for the promise (says St. Peter) is unto you and to your children, and to all that shall hear, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And He (says St. Paul) being made per-

* Heb. ix. 28. ^b Ibid. ix. 12, 26. 28. ^c Ibid. x. 10. 12.

^d Ibid. ix. 15.

^e Acts ii. 39.

fect, and consecrated for evermore, became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him¹; for He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them². In a word, on this account are the sacraments of the Christian religion memorials of a propitiation already made, and applications of our faith and thankfulness: not any offering of Christ again, but an offering of ourselves to God by Him and for Him.

There is yet one argument behind, which the apostle insists upon with great force, taken from the reason and nature of the thing. For thus we find him confining the effect of bulls and goats slain in sacrifice to the *purifying of the flesh*, but ascribing to the blood of Christ alone that of *cleansing the conscience from dead works*³: and in terms yet more expressive and peremptory, pronouncing it *not possible, that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin*⁴. The strength and ground of which assertion, we shall best understand, by observing what is meant in Scripture by *taking away sin*, and by that impossibility of doing to which the legal sacrifices are here concluded under. Now, *to take away sin* is a phrase, which in Scripture language denotes the freeing any person from the guilt of sins already committed; so as that they shall not any more be charged to him in account, nor he suffer the punishment otherwise due for them. And when, as here it is, applied to sacrifices, the

¹ Heb. v. 9.² Ibid. vii. 25. ³ Ibid. ix. 13, 14.⁴ Ibid. x. 4.

meaning is, that such punishment is so far inflicted on them, that God accepts the death of the sacrifice, and in consideration of this remits the death of the offender, in whose behalf and stead such sacrifice was slain. That, then, which the apostle asserts, comes to this much,—that Christ, by offering Himself, and dying for mankind, hath released us from the guilt and punishment of our sins: but, that the beasts slain in sacrifice under the law did not by their death release men, nay, that they could not possibly do so.

By which expression we need not, we must not understand an absolute impossibility; as if God could not either remit sin without any satisfaction at all; or accept any that He thought fit, how mean and worthless soever in itself. For, who shall presume to limit the Supreme Governor's prerogative, or prescribe to the goodness and wisdom of a Being infinite in every perfection? But the meaning is, that according to the scheme upon which God all along had acted, and considering Him in the quality of a Law-giver and a Judge, a nobler compensation was necessary; and for the blood of beasts to have been accepted, in lieu of the punishment due for the sins of men, had been extremely incongruous, and such a method of remission as the end and measures of government could not have been answered by.

The design of every wise governor is to retain men in their duty by enacting such laws as may be a rule for their obedience, and by enforcing those laws with such punishments as shall render the breach of them terrible and exemplary; that so others may be deterred from doing the like; that they, who have already

offended, may be afraid to do so again; and that a just reverence for the constitution may be preserved and maintained.

To these purposes Almighty God having made man immortal gave him a law, the transgression whereof He threatened with death, of which we all have naturally the utmost abhorrence and dread. That law being broken by our first parents, they, and in them human nature became obnoxious to the curse. To preserve His workmanship in so noble a part of the creation from perishing, it pleased God to accept of a vicarious punishment. But, since God still continues to govern us by laws, it was expedient that this should be such an one as still to serve the ends above-mentioned. Now, that does not appear possible to be done by admitting the death of beasts, but is effectually done by receiving the death of criminals as an expiation for the guilt and punishment of sinners.

For what apprehension of divine vengeance, what terror, what example can there be in the death of a brute? This cannot be of any great consequence to us, or stir any very tender passion in us. To see a creature die when devoted to a holy use will not much affect those, who every day kill the like for their own sustenance and refreshment. To purchase a pardon at so cheap a rate would rather render men licentious, and encourage their wickedness, and expose their laws and governor to contempt, than ever produce reformation of manners, or any sort of reverence for such an institution. For when assaulted by temptations, all who allow themselves leisure to think on such occasions, will presently set to computing the damage likely

to follow by unlawful compliances; and if it be found upon balancing the account that a bullock or a sheep is all the loss they have to fear, few sins bid so low as not to gain them over. Nor is the affront to the majesty of God likely to be esteemed great, or the honour for His ordinances worth any very nice regard, when so poor a reparation is taken up with, and the quarrel compounded without any personal pain, and at so despicably slight expence.

On the contrary, God, by accepting no less a compensation for the sins of men than the death and passion of His own innocent and beloved Son, hath given us the clearest idea of the heinousness of sin, and the fierceness of His anger against it. And by the dismal circumstances of that passion He hath rendered the punishment of it most exemplary, hath awakened our fears, and put us upon our guard against that ruin and misery, which must needs be insupportable to the guilty, when the weight of His wrath lay so heavy upon One, Who had none of their remorse and despair to sink Him. For how shall sinners be able to endure to all eternity the unrelenting strokes of that provoked justice, which He, Who had no fault to reprobach Himself with, found so hard to be borne for a few hours only? And greater right was done to God's laws and honour in bruising this excellent Person so sorely, than if each transgressor and offender of them had actually perished for his own iniquities. For what are millions of us in comparison of Him? And how could God secure a respect to His laws, like that which results from a ransom so inestimably precious, and from the high

terms upon which alone He was content that we should be retrieved from everlasting destruction? These things are so very plain, and have been heretofore so largely spoken to, that I may very well forbear any farther proof of them at this time.

But, besides, there is in all this dispensation an exact congruity observed, which could not be in any other sacrifices. Human nature had sinned, and was it not fit that human nature should suffer? Beasts are nothing to us; but Jesus Christ in condescending to become one of us gave us thereby a part and interest in all He did and suffered. Here was equity as well as condescension; that the same nature which suffered in Him should receive in us the benefit of His sufferings. Nor does it appear how that benefit could ever accrue to us from the sufferings of any nature inferior to our own: for death being ordained the punishment of sin, the effect of remission of sin must be immortal life. And could the death of any creature not immortal itself procure for us a right to immortality? No: the sacrifice that takes away sin must not only die, but live again; must be able to give itself immortality, before we can be immortal by virtue of it. And this proves that such sacrifice must at least be man, must be an innocent man, must indeed be much more than man—must be God, as well as man. For the Scripture is express that God *only hath immortality*¹. And it is evident, to common sense, that a being which itself hath not immortality cannot give it to others.

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

By this time, I hope, the apostle's reasoning is clear even to a demonstration, wherein he asserts the weakness and inefficacy of the levitical, and every other sacrifice; and the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's, the evangelical, the only efficacious, the only true one. And how can we enough admire the riches of that grace, which chose this method of making His glory so conspicuous in every adorable attribute concerned in this great work! Most truly does the apostle declare, that Jesus Christ is become to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, as well as redemption¹. O may these kind intentions be accomplished in every soul, and may that God of peace That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, That Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. LUKE XXII.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people.

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot,

¹ 1 Cor. i. 30. ² Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and covenanted with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room. Furnished is there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it,

and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which
doth give for you: this do in remembrance of Me.
Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup
is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for
many. But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth
Me is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of
man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that
man by whom He is betrayed! And they began to
inquire among themselves, which of them it was that
should do this thing. And there was also a strife
among them, which of them should be accounted the
greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the
world exercise lordship over them; and they that
exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.
But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among
you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief,
as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that
sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that
sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that
serveth. Ye are they which have continued with Me
in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a king-
dom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye
may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit
on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And
the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath de-
sired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but
I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and
when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with
Thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I

tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me. And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough. And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed; Saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before

him, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss? When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to Him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Then they took Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed after off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter

remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote Thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council, saying, Art Thou the Christ? tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art Thou then The Son of God? And He said unto them, yea say that I am. And they said, What need we of further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth.

COMMENT.

My purpose is at present to treat of the Lord's supper; of which this gospel relates the institution; and of which the church requires from every member of proper years and understanding a devout participation at the approaching festival of Easter.

The many useful tracts upon this subject (some one whereof at least is in almost every hand) have ren-

being any great enlargement of mine. I have
 Time, therefore, which will best agree with the nature
 of this work, and abundantly suffice for the design I
 have in view, &c.

First, To consider the manner and the end of in-
 stituting this sacrament; and then,

Secondly, To draw from thence some practical re-
 flections with relation to it.

In both these I intend to be very brief and plain,
 and to frame my discourse entirely upon our own
 Communion service; than which, if carefully attended
 to, I am bold to affirm that all the volumes that have
 been (or perhaps that ever shall be) written on this
 subject cannot give more clear, and pious, and pro-
 fitable instructions.

I begin with the manner of instituting this sacra-
 ment. The first remarkable circumstance is its being
 done at the close of the paschal supper. That (I need
 not say) was ordained as a yearly commemoration of
 God's great mercy in sparing the families of the
 Israelites, when His angel destroyed the first-born of
 the Egyptians; and so bringing off His own people,
 in safety and triumph, from a state of bondage and
 insupportable misery. This blessing, great as it
 was, did yet prefigure one infinitely greater, which
 all mankind were now about to receive by the death
 of Christ. He in allusion to that eminent type is
 called the *Lamb of God*, and our *Pasover*. He,
 therefore, having first satisfied the law in celebrating
 the Jewish proceeds to substitute another feast in its

place (John 1. 29. 1 Cor. 5. 7.)

room. Thus, as the rest of their imperfect ordinances were swallowed up in Him, so the commemoration of the substance might give place to that of the image. Hereby it is easy to perceive not only the fitness of such an appointment in general, but the great affinity it had to a former establishment, and the reasonableness of appointing this sacrament at that time.

Secondly, Our Lord upon this occasion *took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and said, This is My body, which is given (and broken) for you*°. Here again is a very near resemblance to the rites of the Jewish passover: in which the master of the family was wont in general to give God solemn thanks for the fruits of the earth; acknowledging Him to be the Creator and bestower of them; and then applying himself to the occasion of that festival, and taking the unleavened bread into his hand he said, *This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers did eat in Egypt*:—a Form, which must in all reason be admitted for the best key to that so very near of kin to it, by which our Saviour consecrated bread to a sacramental use under the New Testament. Now this form seems plainly to signify that neither the one, nor the other is strictly and literally the thing it is called; but a memorial only, and representation of that thing whose name it bears. Nor was it indeed possible, that the bread in Christ's hand could be in reality His body broken, at a time when His body was not yet broken; but the breaking of that bread was a proper figure, and a lively image of those wounds and breaches,

° Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

which were about to be made in His body. Thus it was to those disciples then : and thus it is now to us by representing them already made.

Of this manner of speech moreover the Scripture furnishes other instances in cases of like nature. God Himself says to Abraham of circumcision, *This is My covenant*^p; though Abraham was not then actually circumcised. And even when he was so, it is evident from St. Paul that circumcision never was the covenant itself, but only the evidence and seal of that covenant^q. Moses in like manner says of the paschal lamb, *It is the Lord's passover*^r; when as yet the Lord had not passed over their dwellings; neither did the Lord pass over their dwellings till that lamb was actually killed, and their doors sprinkled with its blood: after which that lamb could be no other than the memorial of His passing over them. So clearly it appears, that the sign hath often the title of the thing signified; and that it hath the name and significance of a thing to be done, as well as of a thing already done. This is a figure usual in any case; but most natural; and in a manner necessary where a sacrament is the subject. For the very condition of a sacrament implies, that the thing representing, and that represented by it, be different; it being manifestly absurd to make any thing a sign of itself. And that we might lie under no temptation to understand our Saviour's words in a sense different from those other forms mentioned, He seems to have sufficiently explained His own meaning by that addition, *Do this*

^p Gen. xvii. 10. ^q Rom. iv. 11. ^r Exod. xii. 11.

(take) and break, and eat; *breath*, in remembrance of
 Me. To which interpretation St. Paul agrees exactly,
 as I shall have occasion to observe by and by. 2. 3. The same is to be said, *thirdly*, concerning the
 other part of this sacrament; where our blessed Sa-
 viour *after supper took the cup, and when He had given
 thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of
 this, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which
 is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of
 sins.* Or, as St. Luke expresses it in the Gospel
 now before us, *This cup is the New Testament in My
 blood, which is shed for you.* The cup here corres-
 ponds to the Jews' cup of blessing at the close of the
 paschal feast; which is now converted to a nobler
 and better signification in the use Christians are com-
 manded to make of it. But by the manner of ex-
 pression it is evident, that by the cup was intended
 the wine in it; and that this wine is the *blood of the
 New Testament, or the New Testament in Christ's
 blood*, no farther than as it represents and commemo-
 rates that blood, and the covenant ratified by the
 shedding of it; which blood yet was not shed, at the
 time when this cup first received that denomination.
 And therefore here again, to set us right St. Paul
 adds those other words of our Lord at the consecra-
 tion of it, *Do this as oft as ye shall drink it, in remem-
 brance of Me.* Thus did our Lord the night before His passion;
 thus do His servants, the ministers of His gospel, at
 every celebration of His Blessed Supper, separate and

Mat. xvi. 27, 28. In a new world. 1600. 1615. 1625. 1635. 1645. 1655. 1665. 1675. 1685. 1695. 1705. 1715. 1725. 1735. 1745. 1755. 1765. 1775. 1785. 1795. 1805. 1815. 1825. 1835. 1845. 1855. 1865. 1875. 1885. 1895. 1905. 1915. 1925. 1935. 1945. 1955. 1965. 1975. 1985. 1995. 2005. 2015. 2025. 2035. 2045. 2055. 2065. 2075. 2085. 2095. 2105. 2115. 2125. 2135. 2145. 2155. 2165. 2175. 2185. 2195. 2205. 2215. 2225. 2235. 2245. 2255. 2265. 2275. 2285. 2295. 2305. 2315. 2325. 2335. 2345. 2355. 2365. 2375. 2385. 2395. 2405. 2415. 2425. 2435. 2445. 2455. 2465. 2475. 2485. 2495. 2505. 2515. 2525. 2535. 2545. 2555. 2565. 2575. 2585. 2595. 2605. 2615. 2625. 2635. 2645. 2655. 2665. 2675. 2685. 2695. 2705. 2715. 2725. 2735. 2745. 2755. 2765. 2775. 2785. 2795. 2805. 2815. 2825. 2835. 2845. 2855. 2865. 2875. 2885. 2895. 2905. 2915. 2925. 2935. 2945. 2955. 2965. 2975. 2985. 2995. 3005. 3015. 3025. 3035. 3045. 3055. 3065. 3075. 3085. 3095. 3105. 3115. 3125. 3135. 3145. 3155. 3165. 3175. 3185. 3195. 3205. 3215. 3225. 3235. 3245. 3255. 3265. 3275. 3285. 3295. 3305. 3315. 3325. 3335. 3345. 3355. 3365. 3375. 3385. 3395. 3405. 3415. 3425. 3435. 3445. 3455. 3465. 3475. 3485. 3495. 3505. 3515. 3525. 3535. 3545. 3555. 3565. 3575. 3585. 3595. 3605. 3615. 3625. 3635. 3645. 3655. 3665. 3675. 3685. 3695. 3705. 3715. 3725. 3735. 3745. 3755. 3765. 3775. 3785. 3795. 3805. 3815. 3825. 3835. 3845. 3855. 3865. 3875. 3885. 3895. 3905. 3915. 3925. 3935. 3945. 3955. 3965. 3975. 3985. 3995. 4005. 4015. 4025. 4035. 4045. 4055. 4065. 4075. 4085. 4095. 4105. 4115. 4125. 4135. 4145. 4155. 4165. 4175. 4185. 4195. 4205. 4215. 4225. 4235. 4245. 4255. 4265. 4275. 4285. 4295. 4305. 4315. 4325. 4335. 4345. 4355. 4365. 4375. 4385. 4395. 4405. 4415. 4425. 4435. 4445. 4455. 4465. 4475. 4485. 4495. 4505. 4515. 4525. 4535. 4545. 4555. 4565. 4575. 4585. 4595. 4605. 4615. 4625. 4635. 4645. 4655. 4665. 4675. 4685. 4695. 4705. 4715. 4725. 4735. 4745. 4755. 4765. 4775. 4785. 4795. 4805. 4815. 4825. 4835. 4845. 4855. 4865. 4875. 4885. 4895. 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sanctify the elements of bread and wine to a religious purpose. So changing them in their use and significance, and devoting them to the more immediate service of God. In this regard they are no longer what they were before, common food to our bodies only; but they become holy memorials of our redemption, and strength and nourishment of souls, and a feast of thanksgiving set forth upon our Lord's own table. The mention whereof puts me in mind to proceed to the second branch of the first general head; the end, I mean, of this happy institution: which our church hath declared to be two-fold, in those words of her solemn exhortation, *To the end we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us. He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort.* Now here, *First*, Let us consider these mysteries, as pledges of His love. The principal and most valuable effects of Christ's love to mankind are blessings of a spiritual and invisible nature. And because to men, who in these bodies must lead lives of sense, it is difficult to entertain a firm persuasion of things which do not affect their bodily organs; therefore it hath pleased God all along to make use of sacraments in religion, which is (as our church in her catechism rightly observes) *Outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, ordained by our Lord Himself, as means whereby we receive the same, and pledges to assure us thereof.*

These then we are commanded to apply as the methods made choice of to convey to us the benefits they betoken. These we are to confide in as effectual for that purpose, and to rest assured that the mercies represented by them are as certainly imparted by and with them, as those very signs are which we see, and feel, and taste. These again we are to consider as having that efficacy and significance, not from any natural force and tendency of their own, but purely from the ordinance and institution of God, Who appointed the use of them for such particular purposes. It is farther observable concerning all the ordinances of this kind, that they begin to take place upon some new conditions of obedience imposed, and as confirmations to promises of some signal advantage, propounded as a reward of compliance with the change or addition of such conditions. The instances themselves make this exceedingly plain. For such are to be reckoned, the tree of life in paradise to our first parents; the bow in the cloud to Noah after the flood; circumcision to Abraham upon separating him and his posterity to be God's peculiar; the passover, and other levitical sacrifices upon enacting the law; and to us Christians baptism and the Lord's supper at the promulgation of the gospel. All these agree thus far, that, by the impressions made upon our bodily senses from objects fit to affect them, all doubt might be removed concerning those benefits of which our senses can have no perception, but which do challenge a right to our faith, (the only principle qualified to apprehend them) whenever evidence of them is made by such marks and emblems, as when rightly

used, God hath determined to bestow them in company with.

And this I take to be the true reason of that particular presence of Christ in the sacraments, above what is usually attributed to other parts of religious worship; that here is an inseparable conjunction of the thing signified with the sign rightly administered; here by visible signs a sensible proof is made of the invisible benefit. For such signs the sacraments exhibit to us, though other acts of religious worship are destitute of them. This also seems to be the apostle's meaning in the text to the *Corinthians*; *the cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* The cup and bread at the holy table are therefore the means of exhibiting, and rendering us partakers of His body broken, and His blood, (or as Himself, according to St. Luke, was pleased to phrase it) *the New Testament in His blood shed for us*. Of which if we will speak intelligibly, and so as may agree with the terms whereby the evangelists and St. Paul have severally described the act of institution, it must be to like effect with the words of our church in her thanksgivings after the Communion: that here we hope, *by the merits and death of Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, to obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion*. (First Prayer.) Or (as in the other form yet more expressly) that those *who have duly received these holy mysteries, God hath*

1. Cor. x. 16.

venchufed to feed with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and doth assure them thereof of His favour and goodness towards them; and that they are very members incorporate in the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of His everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of His dear Son. (Second Prayer.) Since, then, by communicating in the consecrated elements we partake in the body and blood of Christ; that is, since all the advantages which His death was intended to procure for mankind are here exhibited, and sealed to every worthy receiver in particular; no doubt can be made whether these holy mysteries be not deservedly styled pledges of our dear Redeemer's love. It be-

2. The other end of instituting this sacrament is, that it may be a continual remembrance of Christ's death. This likewise is manifest, not only from those words of our blessed Saviour Himself, *Do this in remembrance of Me*; but from those also of St. Paul, *As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come*. If we consider the circumstances of the first Christians, their hardships and persecutions for the faith of Christ, it must be acknowledged, that their making this so constant a part of their solemn worship was an instance of a more than common zeal: the natural construction of such a practice amounting in truth to no less than a declaration, that they were neither afraid, nor ashamed to confess themselves the disciples of a crucified Lord, notwithstanding all the cruelty and con-

tempt which, it was foreseen, such confession would not fail of exposing them to. It were to be wished that any age, that ours in particular, had so just a reverence for Christ and His religion, as might make such open attestation of our adherence to Him cease to be, even in this respect, necessary.

But supposing the whole world agreed in the regards due to Christ and His doctrine, yet would the most public declarations of our thanks still continue a duty; and since He hath Himself prescribed a method for preserving the great things done and suffered upon our account fresh in the memories of men, it will very ill become them, who are so infinitely indebted to His kindness, to decline remembering Him in the way of His own choosing. Accordingly we find this always looked upon as the mark of distinction for His servants and followers; the admission to it, esteemed their highest privilege and comfort; the exclusion from it upon any notorious crime, dreaded and lamented as the most grievous of all calamities. For this was interpreted a dreadful omen of such persons' being debarred entrance into the kingdom of heaven, if it should please God to take them away in that miserable state: an argument, indeed, that they had *neither part nor lot* in those sufferings which they were judged unworthy to commemorate. For all remembrance of this kind supposes an interest in, and a title to the blessings men remember: and the matter is greatly mistaken by those who imagine that every calling to mind of Christ and His death is sufficient to answer the purposes of this institution. For although our Lord hath mentioned no other use

of this sacrament expressly, besides that of remembering Him ; yet does this singly, when considered as it ought to be, imply all those pious acts and dispositions, which the treatises of divines upon this sacrament are usually observed to require, as necessary preparations to it. And this it is my design to explain and prove under my *second* general head, which, I promised, should consist of

II. Some practical reflections relating to this matter.

Now, *first*, by remembering Christ and His death is implied a remembrance of the end for which He died. This the Scriptures acquaint us, was *to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself** : to deliver us from the guilt and punishment of it by suffering in our stead ; and to set us at liberty from the dominion of it by the assistances of His grace. But the Scripture does as plainly inform us, that these benefits are confined to the penitent only ; and therefore to pretend to this remembrance, without sincere endeavours to promote that end, is mockery and affront to His sufferings. Consequently the remembrance of Christ's death in this sacrament is an obligation to hearty sorrow for our sins already past ; to stedfast purposes of living better for the time to come ; and to actual amendment in pursuit of those good purposes,

Secondly, He who remembers Christ dying for him is supposed to have a due sense of the merit and efficacy of that death. He must believe that God hath accepted it in full satisfaction to His offended justice,

* Heb. ix. 26.

and set Him forth as a propitiation, in Whom we have forgiveness and acceptance. Consequently he approaches this table with assured persuasion, that the great work of redemption is accomplished. By this persuasion he feels himself invigorated and actuated perpetually. It is like the soul in his body, animating every part: it influences his whole behaviour, supports him under trials, arms him against temptations, silences his doubts, lays the disquiet of fears and misgivings to sleep, banishes despair utterly, and shews him to himself, though most polluted and unworthy when considered abstractedly and alone, yet, when considered as one for whom Christ died, the purchase of that blood which could not be shed in vain, and sure to be accepted in and for the beloved Son of God. And thus he attains to another qualification, declared to be necessary upon our approaches to the blessed table, *a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour.*

Thirdly, He that remembers the death of Christ in our Lord's meaning, recollects that *His blood was shed, and His body broken* for him and for many; or as St. John in terms yet more extensive says, that *He is the propitiation, not for his sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world*. And this reflection cannot fail to awaken those endearments, which naturally grow from men being involved in the same common danger and misery, and partaking in the same common deliverance. It will put us in mind, how by suffering in our nature He hath united to

Himself all who share that nature. It will represent the friendship due to those who are thus made heirs of the same hope, sons of the same family, members of the same body, washed in the same baptism, fed at the same table with ourselves. This is the inference made from it by St. Paul, *We being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread* *. It will, in a word, expose most sensibly the wickedness, the absurdity of hatred, or revenge, or any malicious grudge, or scorn, or contempt, or coldness, or neglect, towards any for whom Christ did not disdain to die, as well as for us. And thus we shall arrive at a *third* necessary pre-disposition to communicating worthily, that of being in *perfect charity with all men*.

Fourthly; Remembering Christ and His death does also presume a man sensible that he must have been miserable to all eternity without it; that this was an admirable contrivance for snatching a whole world out of the jaws of death and hell; that it was an instance of unparalleled mercy in God the Father, and a most amazing condescension in God the Son; that they are even monsters of ingratitude who read, and hear, and reflect Who it was That died, and what He endured, and for whom, and see the happy consequences of His sufferings, if they do not feel their hearts wonderfully excited to acknowledge, and magnify, and publish the praises of their Benefactor and only Saviour; if they do not love Him in return; or if they think any thing too much, that He thinks fit

* 1 Cor, x. 17.

to require as a testimony of their love ; and, since a Person so far above us is not capable of being thanked in any other way, if they do not make it their constant study, to express the grateful sentiments they have of this inestimable mercy by acts of reverence and devotion, by diligence to serve and obey Him, and the strictest care never to displease or grieve Him. This is a temper of mind, which the reason of the thing proves to be our duty at all times. But at the seasons of partaking in our Lord's body and blood it is so essential, so exceedingly necessary, that then *above all things, we must give most humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man, Who did humble Himself even to the death of the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness, and the shadow of death, that He might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life.* (Exhortation at the Times of celebrating the Communion.)

Such is the preparation requisite to this holy sacrament, consisting of habits and dispositions, of which whosoever is destitute he cannot be a good Christian : and therefore these are not to be acquired, but strengthened only, and refreshed when men come hither. And since in the working these up to as high a degree as we are able consists the perfection of a Christian life, it must needs be of great use and strong obligation, that we lose no opportunity of doing it. The neglect and the careless receiving of the Lord's supper are inlets to all manner of evil.

And I know not whether the scandalous corruption of our own age and people be more justly imputable to any cause than to the long and general disuse of this sacrament, introduced by the confusions and hypocrisy of the last * century. Meanwhile, since this holy ordinance hath been proved not only a remembrance of our Lord's death, commanded to be perpetual, but also a sure pledge of His love; how barbarous are we to our own souls in denying them the best, the most lasting comfort, of frequently rejoicing in those hopes and assurances, which are here most effectually cherished? If not for Christ's sake then, (which yet were most unthankful and base), at least for our own, (which not to do were most inhuman and stupid), let us beware of affronting so good a Lord by refusing His invitations to so much mercy. Let us not draw upon ourselves the punishment of those unworthy wretches, who went *one to his farm, another to his merchandise*, till they were at last excluded from the *marriage feast of the great King* ^a.

Lastly, From what hath gone before on this occasion it is very obvious to observe the reasonableness of that rubric in our liturgy, which contains so general a command of communicating at *Easter*. For when, indeed, can it be more properly done than at this holy season? when may we expect more plentiful supplies of grace? when do we put ourselves more directly in the way of it, than by thus doing honour

* The 17th century is here meant, the original work having been printed at the commencement of the 18th century.

^a Matt. xxii. 5. Luke xiv.

to that body and blood which was broken and shed for us, at the very time when it was actually broken and shed?

If ever our devotions can be exalted to a pitch in any degree worthy of those blessed mysteries, surely it must be then, when the repeated contemplation of our Lord's glorious achievements for us has raised our heavy souls, and put them on the wing. If ever our faith in Christ be lively and steadfast, it is then most likely to be so when we celebrate His conquest over death and hell, and take courage from the rout now given to His enemies and ours. If ever we be touched with deep and tender remorse, and melt into penitential tears, and heartily abhor our faults and follies, and ourselves for them; surely this will be the effect of reading, hearing, recollecting our dear Redeemer's sufferings; the bitterness of His bodily pains, the anguish of His soul, and the dreadful punishment inflicted upon sin in His Person. If ever the love of Christ commit a holy violence upon our hearts, *and constrain us to obedience*; when are we so prepared to submit to it, and be vanquished by it, as now that Jesus Christ is crucified in our ears, and before our eyes for a whole week together; and hath thereby so fully possessed us with ideas of His most astonishing kindness and condescension?

So fit, so advantageous a time is this for feeding on the body of our Lord; so scandalous is it not now to *do this* in remembrance of Him; so much is it to be feared that they do not remember Christ at all to purpose, who refuse this respect to His command, His Person, His sufferings, and cannot be prevailed

upon to remember Him in the method of His own appointing.

THURSDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

THE EPISTLE.

1 COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

17 IN this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one

17 One thing I am about to mention, which deserves great blame. It is the disorderly manner of your meeting together upon religious accounts.

18 For I am told, that in these assemblies there are some of you who divide from the rest, and eat separately; and this I believe to be true of some of you.

19 For such divisions, which are the natural effects of pride, and of other sinful dispositions, God permits to take place in the church. As for other reasons, so for this particularly, that they who are truly good men may hereby have an opportunity of shewing it, and of distinguishing themselves from the bad.

20 When therefore you meet in such a disorderly manner,

• 1. COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

this is not behaving yourselves like men who come to the Lord's supper; for that is a feast of love, in which every person in the congregation hath an equal right to communicate.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

21 For your practice is, that, instead of making this to be one common regular table; they who come first eat first; and they who contribute much eat much; so that some are sent away empty who had little or nothing to bring; and others who bring in plenty eat and drink to excess.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

22 If such distinctions between rich and poor must be made, why are they not made at home? How is it, that you thus affront the public congregation by exposing the poverty of those Christians, who are, on such occasions, all upon the same level? This is a corruption, which deserves very sharp reproof.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread:

23, 24, 25 Consider with yourselves, how different this proceeding is from the method taken by our Lord at the institution of this sacrament. He, (as I learned from Him, and acquainted you) the night He was betrayed, took bread

24 And when He had

1 COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.

into His hands, and after blessing it, and God for it, brake that bread, and declared this to be a representation of His body to be broken on the cross; commanding His disciples to eat it as a memorial of His death and sufferings for their sakes. And accordingly He distributed of it to them all. In like manner He did with the cup after supper; declaring the wine contained in it to be a memorial of His blood shed for the ratification of the new covenant between God and man; and commanding them, upon every occasion of drinking it, to do it in remembrance of His blood so shed, and this covenant so ratified. And every one of them drank of it accordingly.

26 Thus you see, that the end of this sacrament is thereby to commemorate the death of our blessed Lord, and to keep Him in our minds during His absence from us: in which memorials consequently every Christian, of what degree or condition soever, hath an equal right to partake; because every one is equally concerned in the mercy, remembered and represented by them.

1 COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

27 They therefore, who by their irregular practice shall profane a sacrament, appointed to so holy a use; and by unequal and uncharitable distinctions shall contradict the design of an ordinance, which expresses Christ's love to all mankind in general, (high and low, rich and poor alike,) do treat His body and blood with a contempt like that of His murderers, who affronted and insulted Him, as if He had been not only a common man, but one of the vilest of men.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

28 Therefore, before every approach to this sacrament, it is fit that a man see into, and be satisfied with the disposition of his own mind; that he come with due reverence to so holy an ordinance, and with charity to all those for whom the death, commemorated in it, was undergone. And then he will partake of this sacrament worthily.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

29 For he that comes in a profane and disorderly manner is so far from receiving benefit, or a pledge of God's love in these consecrated elements, that they are to him an increase of guilt, and a pledge of punishment from God; Who

1 COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

must needs be highly provoked at the irreverence of those men, who make no difference between the memorials of Christ's body, distributed in the church, and any common meal.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

30 Thus it is plain, God hath expressed His anger against you of Corinth already, by punishing this profaneness and violation of the Lord's supper with diseases, of which some among you still lie languishing, and others are dead.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

31 For if we would take an account of ourselves, and be careful to celebrate this supper of the Lord with a reverence due to a feast of charity, and the commemoration of a Saviour dying for the sins of the world, we should prevent these punishments from God.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

32 But when God thus chastises us with temporal afflictions, (*weakness, and sickness, &c.*) He intends that these should be warnings to us; that so, repenting of the faults which have provoked Him to send them upon us, we may escape the eternal punishments that await the wicked and profane and impenitent hereafter.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come to-

33 Therefore I exhort you, as brethren, that at all times

1 COR. XI. 17.

Paraphrase.

gether to eat, tarry one
for another.

of celebrating this holy feast
you wait for the whole con-
gregation; and order matters
so that every one may partake
of it.

34 And if any man
hunger, let him eat at
home; that ye come not
together unto condemna-
tion. And the rest will I
set in order when I come.

34 And if any man's appe-
tite be so keen, that upon this
pretence he would hasten the
feast before its proper time;
let him satisfy these desires at
his own house; and not draw
upon the public congregation
the scandal and punishment of
such indecent practices, as this
I have been reprehending. And
for other matters among you
that stand in need of regulat-
ing, they shall be taken care of
by me, when I see you.

COMMENT.

I HAVE, in the paraphrase on this portion of Scrip-
ture, been larger than is usual; in hopes to deliver
it, if possible, from those mistaken notions of un-
worthily receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lord's
Supper, which they, who would excuse their not
frequenting it, pretend to ground upon this passage
to the Corinthians. With how little reason they do
so this exposition makes it evident; but, that I may
make the case plain even to the meanest capacity, I
desire these two things may be farther considered:

1. That the damnation which St. Paul here speaks of, is not eternal misery; or that which we find elsewhere termed the *damnation of hell*. The apostle sufficiently explains his own meaning by adding, (ver. 30) *for this cause many are weak and sickly among you*. Those words manifestly restrain the *damnation* spoken of before to bodily distempers, and temporal punishments; and that no other but temporal punishments could be here intended, follows unavoidably from the 32d verse, where this is called a *chastening of the Lord*, to prevent some worse condemnation. Now eternal damnation hath nothing of the nature of a chastisement in it; it is entirely an act of vengeance. Nor is there any worse or future condemnation to follow, against which that can possibly be inflicted as a warning or remedy. Consequently, the damnation, by the fear of which men commonly profess to be terrified from this sacrament, is altogether different from that mentioned here, and hath nothing to do with the text of St. Paul.

2. As the punishment our people now scare themselves with is not, so neither is the unworthiness they profess to suspect themselves of, the same with that of these Corinthians. For the clearing this point let it be observed, that in the primitive church it was customary to bring to their religious assemblies, every one as he was able and disposed, provisions for a common entertainment. Out of these provisions a convenient quantity was set apart to be consecrated for the blessed sacrament. This sacrament was in some churches celebrated before, in others after *the feast of love*:—for so this entertainment was used to be called.

it in all places they were both celebrated in company with each other. The design of these feasts is to express and maintain friendship and concord; and to shew that Christians esteemed themselves one family, and one body: to be a comfort to the poor; whose necessities were thus relieved at the public expense; and to speak the charity and condescension of the rich, who thus declared their meaner brethren, all Christian privileges, fellow members, and equal to the greatest. These voluntary contributions are styled oblations, because every contributor was understood to devote what he brought to a religious use wholly to divest himself of any property in it, to make of the whole one common fund, to which the church only had from thenceforth a claim. As therefore these entertainments were a feast with God, and with the whole body of believers; every one who had a right to this table (as all had, for some notorious offence were not shut out from communion of the Lord's Supper) had a right to sit at the table alike, though all did not contribute alike; nay, though the circumstances of some were so strait, they could not contribute any part at all.

When this parity, an emblem of Christ's universal love to mankind, was broken in upon; when one would take upon him to eat at his own table and in proportion to his own bringing; this separating what had been made common; taking that which had been solemnly given to God for his church; a defeating of all the ends and significations of these assemblies; a reproach to, and a scorn of the poor, by invading the comforts and

refreshments, designed for them in a more peculiar manner. But especially, it was an insufferable scandal and profanation, when such feasts as were intended to promote religion became the occasions of riot and excess. Yet these abuses grew so fast, and gave so great and just offence, as to render the total disuse of the *Agapæ*, or love-feasts, expedient. Hence it became a general custom to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper singly: and hence, instead of offering bread and wine in kind, money was brought for the support of them that minister in holy things, and for the relief of the poor. And such contributions were, by public order, deposited in the hands of proper persons, most likely to know their several necessities, and to proportion this relief accordingly.

Is it not now as clear as the light, that in a church like ours, where the consecrated elements are furnished at the public expense, where no man brings or takes his own supper, but all is delivered by the minister without any respect of persons, where distribution is made equally, decently, devoutly, and as nigh to the primitive institution as can well be imagined; is it not clear, I say, that the unworthiness charged upon the Corinthians neither is, nor possibly can be ours? And if so, it must follow, that these texts of St. Paul are perverted to a very wrong use, when made the pretence of keeping men from the holy table, whose present circumstances have no manner of concern in, or relation to them.

I readily allow, that men may be under the danger of receiving unworthily, upon several other accounts as well as this. Every notorious offence against,

very wilful failure in the particulars which my last discourse laid down as fit preparations for this blessed ordinance, does without question render them unworthy. But how does St. Paul proceed upon this occasion? By those expressions, *Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me: and as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come,* (Ver. 25, 26,) he abundantly intimates that this is a duty which ought frequently to be performed. So the first Christians plainly understood it; for they seem to have made this as constant a part of their public worship as any other. Again, after denouncing the judgments of God against unworthy communicants, he does not for prevention of these exhort them to consult their own safety by abstaining altogether, but by *examining and judging themselves,* and so *eating of that bread and drinking of that cup.* (Ver. 28.) Thus did the apostle; thus does our church argue. *If any man say, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am afraid to come: wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say, ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse yourselves, and say, ye are not ready? Consider earnestly with yourselves, how little such feigned excuses will avail before God.* (Second Exhortation.) In short, he that comes not, and he that comes unworthily, are both of them in a dangerous and damnable state. The former because he will not use his best remedy; the latter because he profanes and abuses his best remedy. And there is but one way for both to be safe; which is by coming as often, and as well

prepared as they can ; and then God will not fail to forgive and kindly to accept them.

Did men but consider, (what is most certainly true) that every act of religion, public or private, requires the very same disposition of mind with this sacrament ; that no man is fit (for instance) to say the Lord's Prayer, who is not fit to eat and drink at His table ; that reading, and hearing, and praying unworthily (that is, without due reverence, and in the love and indulgence of any wilful sin) is damnable, as well as unworthy communicating ; they would soon see cause to alter their measures with relation to this matter. They would find that the excuses usually alleged for the neglect of this would, if pursued through their just consequences, hold every wint as strongly for casting off every branch of solemn worship enjoined by the Christian religion. I speak not this with the least intent to lower the respect and care due to this holy ordinance ; God forbid : but I would gladly heighten it for others ; such as prayer, public and private, hearing God's word, and the like ; which are too commonly done as things of course. And yet there is not one of all these, the due performance whereof does not require the same sorrow for our past sins, the same stedfast purposes of amendment, the same faith in Christ, the same charity to our fellow Christians and to all men, as does communicating at the blessed table. No man is accepted by God in any of these, who is not fit to come to the other. To say all in a word ; no man who leads a good life can ever be unprepared for the Lord's Supper ; and no man who leads a bad one can come pre-

pared to that, or to any Christian ordinance whatsoever.

Thus much, I hope, may also serve to shew the vanity of another sort of unpreparedness, commonly alleged:—the want, I mean, of leisure to retire so many hours, or to say so many prayers before each communion. These are, no question, very proper exercises, when men have opportunities for them; and no man can take too much pains with himself to afflict his soul with remorse, or to raise his affections and devotion on such occasions. But to think that by these meditations and prayers we are, and that without them we cannot be prepared, is rank superstition, and an error that draws a world of ill consequences after it. For even those prayers, if we hold fast my darling lust, are an abomination; an hypocrisy that mocks God, and deludes one's own soul. And I wish all people could be made duly sensible, that although a *week's preparation*, when such extraordinary addresses are added to a *conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*, may be exceeding well; yet nothing can be depended upon, but a communicating frequently and reverently; and living, between one opportunity and another, as if we were every day to communicate. To cease to do evil, and learn to do well; to love God, and keep His commandments; to follow the works of our calling with industry; and to provide for our families with honesty; to trust to God's good providence, and be content with our condition; to preserve unity in the church, peace and order in the state; to study to be quiet, to do our own business, and the duty of the

capacity and the relations we stand in: to abhor uncleanness, and evil-speaking, and all uncharitableness; this is true preparation. And he that thus communicates, though at a minute's warning, will never be rejected of God, or deserve to be condemned by men. And therefore men would do well to consider this; and how they can answer either living out of such a state, or neglecting the sacrament when they are in it.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. LUKE XXIII.

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found This Fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in This Man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought This man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him; no, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will there-

fore chastise Him, and let Him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them de-

riden Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the Chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If Thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself. And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly This was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

COMMENT.

THERE are three things in this day's Gospel, which I choose at present to treat of as more especially calling for our serious consideration.

I. The *first* is our Lord's great charity in praying for His enemies, ver. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

II. The *second* is the case of the penitent thief from ver. 39 to ver. 43, inclusively.

III. The last, our Lord's commending His soul to His Father, ver. 46.

Of these briefly in their order.

I. I begin with our Lord's praying for His enemies; ver. 34; in which He hath set us an example of the most perfect charity: as will appear, if we observe,

First, that the praying God to forgive them implies that He Himself forgave them. For the very design of prayer is to beg that God would do that, which the person praying is heartily disposed to do; but either cannot compass it at all, or not without God's special assistance. And therefore to ask of Him that which if in our own power we would not grant, is turning our devotion into mockery, and a piece of the vilest and most impious dissimulation. 'Tis true that Christ, as God, could bestow the blessing He here intercedes for. But I have said heretofore, that in all those actions which speak submission

(and such to be sure is prayer) He is to be considered as a mere man. The powers of the Divine nature, though actually inseparable from His human, yet are at such times to be looked upon as under a voluntary suspension. And therefore neither does the humble manner of this intercession prove any thing against His divinity ; nor the being God as well as man call into question the sincerity of His request ; though able in one of these capacities to give that, which in the other He vouchsafed to ask.

Meanwhile, the point I am upon is sufficiently confirmed by our Lord's own command in another place : where, as an evidence of *loving our enemies, after doing good to them that hate us, and blessing them that curse us*, is added, *pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you*^b. This is indeed the highest, as well as the most beneficial instance of charity : such as no perverseness of our enemies can obstruct ; but such, withal, as cannot come in regularly, till we have brought ourselves to those that went before : because they may be counterfeit and designing, where we transact with men only : but in this God is a party ; and prayer appeals to Him for the earnestness of our wishes, and the integrity of our hearts.

2. *Secondly*, The greatness of our Saviour's charity is most conspicuous from the time of putting up this prayer. It was not only for men who had persecuted Him to the death, prefaced that death with all the calumnies and reproaches, the utmost insolence

^b Matt. v. 44.

and indignities that unrelenting malice could invent or execute : but it was at the very instant when He was expiring under inconceivable torture and anguish, and in the most infamous manner bleeding out an innocent soul. It was for merciless wretches, hardened murderers, who were even then insulting over His last agonies, and triumphing in their own wicked barbarity. So far above the power of shame, and pain, and wrong, and still obstinate and exasperating spite, was the firmness and meekness of His holy mind. And what a pattern have we here to set before our eyes ! we, who are generally so soon provoked, so violently transported, so implacably incensed at injuries or affronts of no mighty consequence ; so hard to forgive, even when we feel no smart ; even when the heat is over, and the damage imaginary only. Oh ! how far short is this of His perfection ! how unlike to His true greatness of soul ; Who is said, in His patience and charity more especially, to have *left us an example that we should follow His steps* ^c.

3. A *third* instance of this charity consists in the apology made here in behalf of His murderers, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. They might indeed, and ought to have known ; but the Scriptures bear them witness that if they had *known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory* ^d. This ignorance is all the extenuation the horror of their crime was capable of ; and some extenuation it always is ; though in proportion less, as the means of

^c 1 Pet. ii. 21.

^d 1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts iii. 17.

knowledge are greater. Thus our Lord does not only wish their pardon, but plead and turn advocate for the vilest of miscreants. A noble warning to all His disciples, that they too when ill treated should make all possible allowances, and put the most favourable construction upon the wrongs they suffer, that they would let ignorance and infirmities, passions and surprises, be heard in mitigation of their resentments, and by these be inclined to give their own, and to beg of God His pardon for the worst of injuries and enemies.

II. The case of the penitent thief was the *second* thing I promised to speak to. And here two things are fit to be considered. (1.) The comforts it administers when rightly understood. (2.) The false security too commonly grounded upon it, and consequently the great danger of its being misunderstood.

1. As to the *first*, it is remarkable that the other evangelists say, *the thieves* reviled our Lord upon the cross*. Now, though it be an usual and very allowable figure of speech to put a plural number for a singular; yet St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome have chosen to reconcile those with St. Luke's account here, by understanding both to have been guilty of it; but this to have retracted, and to have been converted as we see. Admitting their interpretation of the place, the operations of grace upon his mind were still more wonderfully sudden and strong. But, be that as it will, the Scripture furnishes no instance

* Matt. xxvii. 44. Mark xv. 32.

like it, of so happy a change at a man's last moments. The *labourers of the eleventh hour* are indeed a mighty encouragement to all people who have had the misery of living long in ignorance and sin : yet those labourers had one hour left, in which, we are at liberty to suppose, they signalized themselves, and wrought with extraordinary diligence. But here we have a poor wretch almost expiring, certain death upon him, dying under public punishment for a very heinous crime ; and yet, at the end of a life led probably after the rate that theirs generally are whose wickedness at length brings them to an untimely and scandalous end, this creature is softened at once, received into favour, and promised a translation from the gibbet into paradise that very day.

This certainly is a monument of mercy, a standing comfort to all who truly repent, though at their last hour ; an anchor of hope to sorrowful sinners, and a plain argument that sincere amendment never comes too late. For even they who have long lain in the *snares of the devil*, and through the course of a whole life *been taken captive by him at his will*, shall like this reclaimed thief be rescued, accepted, rewarded ; provided they like him return to God, and improve their never so small remainder of time to the best advantage.

But the fatal delusion in this case is, that few people consider what it is to be converted *like him*. They look at the event, but forget the circumstances which led to it. And hence grow those false confidences, and the great danger of misunderstanding and misapplying the account of this matter, which I am en-

deavouring now to prevent by my *second* particular upon this subject.

For when this action comes to be thoroughly weighed, some things will be found in it very extraordinary, some that seldom have, some that can never have a parallel. This man, it is probable, had never seen or heard of Christ before; or, if he had it is yet more strange that he, who had stood out till then, should come in to the acknowledgment of Him now. Now, when His enemies were insulting over Him, when His own disciples and the companions of His preaching and miracles had forsaken Him, when they, who once *trusted it had been He Who should have redeemed Israel*, despaired of Him, when the companion of his wickedness was at the same time reproaching and blaspheming Him; that he, I say, should, in this lowest ebb of misery, and shame, and scorn, that ever the Son of God did or could stoop to, throw himself upon His protection, acknowledge His kingdom, believe Him Lord of a future and better state, and the disposer of rewards and happiness after death; and all this upon so surprising a conviction, and in answer to the very first calls of grace; this argues so ingenuous a temper, so noble and so bold a faith, as never was outdone, as never can in all respects be equalled, except the same Jesus were again to be crucified. For no man's conversion ever had, ever can have, upon other terms, the same disadvantages and discouragements which this man's laboured under, and so generously overcame.

Might not then St. Chrysostom, as with great force he does, rebuke the impudence of those late penitents,

who presume to take sanctuary in this example?—those, who live under the ministry of the gospel, and enjoy both the outward calls of God's word, and the inward solicitations of His Spirit, but turn a deaf ear continually to both?—who profess to believe a risen and glorified Redeemer, to expect Him as their Judge, and call Him Lord and King, and have listed themselves in His service by baptism; but pay Him no degree of that respect which this stranger did, when He had rendered Himself of no reputation, and appeared in the guise of the vilest malefactor? This certainly shews such a difference as must, if reflected on, convince all wilful delayers of repentance, that they have no precedent to produce for their confidence. Indeed, their state is as unlike to his, as that of a conversion astonishingly speedy and gallant is to an obstinate backwardness and delay: and the only part of the comparison that holds is that of death being at the door.

That God should communicate the assistance of His grace very liberally to one so disposed to close with the first motions of it as this thief, agrees with those exalted notions of His goodness, which both reason and revelation have given us. But what assurance can we have from either of His readiness to assist and bring over those who have received it in vain? Why should they suppose, that a Spirit, so often driven away, will be at their call whenever they please, and by a more than common influence work in them a change, just when they come to die, which they would never be prevailed upon to concur with, or consent to in the whole course of their lives? No,

no. If these men are desirous to find a parallel, they have it here at hand. The other thief, who went out of the world railing and reviling, is much more likely to be the true emblem of their sad condition. He is far from being the only instance of a wicked creature given up by God at his last hour; but the penitent thief is the only one we are sure of reclaimed at his last hour: and this too for such an one as cannot be drawn into consequence by any Christian, by reason of those many circumstances, in which it is not so much as possible for this case to agree with that of any who shall presume to defer his repentance, though but till the next hour.

Let us therefore deal fairly with ourselves, and not read this story by halves. Let us in it contemplate the justice of a provoked, as well as the mercy of a forgiving God. If *to-day, while it is called to-day*, we do our part; we have a title to the consolations of this case. If we put off from day to day, and continue to harden our hearts, it contains not one syllable of comfort for us; but all we build upon it is without foundation. The extent of our lives we cannot, but the difficulties of a death-bed repentance we may certainly know. And if once matters come to this pass, we cannot be sure of the power, nay we cannot be sure of so much as the will to repent. But, supposing this also not to be denied us, we cannot have the same assurance of being then accepted which this thief had. For many things at such a time concur to deceive us: and whether the good purposes then raised in our minds would be steadfast and perpetual, God only can foresee. We find by experience

many who have resolved well, if God grant an unexpected recovery, relapse into their old impieties ; and do not only deceive others, but themselves too. The only course then to be safe and easy is to repent so early, that the fruits may put the sincerity of our change past any doubt. For we can never have too mean a thought of doing this upon beds of languishing, and at the approach of death. And the most that ought to be said in favour of such a delay, is not to pronounce it altogether desperate. But this is a danger, from which, I hope, the due observance of this holy season we are now in hath delivered us. And if so, then may we, with great equanimity, imitate our blessed Lord in that act, which I proposed to treat of in the

III. *Third* and last place, described in these words, ver. 46, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.* The observations, which this furnishes matter for, are principally these that follow.

1. This proves the reality of Christ's human nature, with regard to the soul, no less than the body. ' For the spirit here recommended to God could not be the Divine Spirit, which some ancient heretics imagined Christ's body to have been actuated by ; but it must be the same intelligent part of Him, as man, which is in every one of us the principle of life, and sense, and motion ; because this is it which death dislodges from a fleshly mass, no longer in condition to receive, and to be influenced by it.

2. The manner of our Lord's giving up this spirit hath generally been thought to carry in it an air of authority ; and to intimate, that as the delivering of

it was an act of free choice, so the resuming of it was likewise fully in His own power. The form made use of on this occasion is such as properly denotes the leaving goods of value, to be kept by a trusty friend till called for again. It may be said, indeed, that other good men, who confessedly have not the same power, are found to have committed their souls to God in like manner. They have indeed done so; but with this difference: that, in Christ this was a declaration of His having purchased immortality for human nature, and a sort of claim for raising it from the dead; in others it is an expression of their faith, that their souls and bodies shall again be united by virtue of that resurrection, which their Saviour's rising hath ensured to them.

3. From hence it follows, that the human soul is a substance distinct from the body; that it lives after it in a state separate from it; and such a state as is susceptible of happiness or misery. For, why is the spirit here the object of our Lord's care, and deposited in God's hands, but because these phrases are set to signify a place of safety from danger, where souls shall not only survive, but live too in a manner far distant from that in which they lived here: where no temptation shall be able to assault, no sin to pollute, no affliction to discompose them? This we find to have been the sense even of the Jewish church before our Saviour's time. *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery. And*

their going from us to utter destruction, but they are in peace!

4. *Lastly*, From hence there seems also to be sufficient foundation for concluding, that the souls of good men enter upon some degrees of bliss immediately after their departure out of the body. Especially, if together with these words to His Father we take Christ's promise, made just before to the penitent thief, that *he should that day be with Him in paradise.*

These are particulars which cannot now conveniently receive an enlargement worthy of them, and are therefore recommended to the improvement of the reader: who will not find it difficult from hence to draw such inferences as may turn to great account; by supporting him under the trials of the present life; by arming him against the immoderate fears of death; and by quickening him in such virtues and graces as are necessary to justify his hopes of exchanging this for an infinitely better state, when God shall see him ripe for it.

GOOD FRIDAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ

'Wisdom. iii. 1, 2, 3.

was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, Who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end ^c.

Amen.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, by Whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ^b.

Amen.

O MERCIFUL God, Who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made; nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics; and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to Thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end ^d. *Amen.*

^c Eph. iii. 14, 15. Matt. xxvi. xxvii. Acts ii. 23. Phil. ii. 8, 9, 40, 10, 11.

^b 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Eph. iv. 4. 1 Pet. i. 2. Rom. xii. 4—8. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 20. Eph. iv. 1.

^d Wisd. xi. 24. Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. xxxiii. 11. John x. 11, 16. Rom. xi. 5. ix. 27.

THE EPISTLE.

HEB. x. 1.

THE law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.¹ For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings, and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from hence-

forth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

COMMENT.

THE Epistle for this day, being a continuation of an argument carried on in the chapter foregoing, hath already fallen, in great measure, within the compass

of a former discourse upon that subject^k. For this reason it is, that I conceive a paraphrase of the words not very necessary, and that all I design to say at present shall be somewhat very briefly on these two points:

I. *First*, That the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin; and,

II. *Secondly*, That the sacrifice was offered by Him upon the cross.

I. *First*, I say, the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. The best light we can have concerning matters of this nature is derived from the ordinances and customs of the Jews and their law: Now thence it is certain, that such ceremonies were used as plainly intimated a translation of punishment and guilt from the person offering to the thing offered, and an acceptance of one life taken away, as substituted in the place of another which by the law was looked upon as forfeited.

To this purpose the owner of the beast devoted to the altar, by bringing and laying his hands upon the head of it did thus declare his property first, and then the free transferring of that property to God, by delivering it to death for the ends and uses specified in the law. And with allusion to this rite it is, that we read of Christ *laying down His life, giving Himself for us, offering His own body a sacrifice for sin*^l; and many other passages of like import.

It is also certain, that in sin-offerings the party con-

* Epistle for Wednesday before Easter.

^l 1 John iii. 16. Tit. ii. 14. Heb. x. 9, 10.

cerned did confess his crime over the sacrifice; thus, as is expressed in the law of the scape-goat, *putting his transgressions upon the head of the beast* ^m; that such beast was afterwards looked on as unclean; that it conveyed a legal impurity to those who touched it; as, being, in the eye of the law, charged with their sins in whose behalf it was offered. This was the reason why such sacrifices were not to be eaten, as the rest were, by the offerers; but by the priest only ⁿ. They were esteemed in this regard mediators between God and His people; and their consumption of it testified God's acceptance, and the abolition of the sin. This, again, the cause why the bodies of the beasts offered on the most solemn occasions of this kind were carried out, and burned without the camp ^o. All which are ceremonies necessary to be attended to, for a right understanding of those very significant passages which speak of God's *laying on Christ the iniquities of us all*, of His *bearing our sins in His own body*, of His being *made sin, and a curse for us*, of His *suffering without the gate of the city*, in conformity with the bodies *burnt without the camp*, and our having *a sin-offering of which the Jews have no right to eat* ^p.

Once more: It is assigned as a reason for prohibiting the use of blood in common food, that this was *given upon the altar to make an atonement for their souls*; and hence it is, that we so often hear of *redemption through Christ's blood*, of *peace made by the blood of His cross*;

^m Levit. xvi. 21.

ⁿ Ibid. x. 17.

^o Ibid. xvi. 27.

^p Isai. liii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. Heb. xiii. 10, 11, 12.

that Himself mentions the *New Testament in His blood*; and the like [¶].

These, and other places of the same nature, every considering man must acknowledge it reasonable to interpret in agreement with those in the Old Testament, to which they so manifestly allude. And if so, it will follow that either the Jews themselves had no such thing, or else that the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice. More truly such, indeed, than any of theirs; as it actually conveyed the benefits, which those could not; as its virtue was inherent, theirs only relative; and as it is the substance, of which theirs were shadows and representations: for that those were no better hath been largely proved before: and that this was not only a true and proper, but a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction, a very few words will suffice to shew, after what I have had occasion to urge on this point already.

How acceptable to God this sacrifice was, it is the design of all those texts to inform us, which declare His perfect innocence. And this is done, either in plain terms, such as *doing and knowing no sin*; suffering, *the just for the unjust*; not needing, as other priests, *to offer first for Himself, and then for the people*; or with reference to the rule of choosing out the best for the service of the altar, as when we find Him called *the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, the Lamb, That takes away the sin of the world; That was slain from the foundation of the world*; and

[¶] ¶ Levit. xvii. 10, 11, 12. Rom. iii. 25. Colos. i. 20. Luke xxii. 20.

That offered Himself to God without spot, through the Eternal Spirit^r.

The same truth is yet more clearly and fully contained in those many scriptures, that ascribe to Him our complete deliverance from all the inconveniences and miseries, which sin is any where charged with bringing upon mankind.

Is the sinner in debt to the law, and like bankrupts of old, or criminals under condemnation, liable to be given up to the tormentors? Christ, we are told, *hath cancelled the hand-writing that was against us, nailing it to His cross*: He hath given His life a ransom for many; He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law; He hath bought us with a price, so that in Him we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins^s.

Have sinners departed from God, alienated His affection, and put themselves in a state not only of distance from, but even of enmity against Him? The aliens and strangers, *who were once afar off*, are said to be made nigh by the blood of Christ; and He hath reconciled us to His Father by the body of His flesh through death. For which reason we find Him emphatically styled our peace, because He hath slain this enmity by His cross^t.

Does sin leave a stain and pollution upon the souls of men, such as renders them odious and loathsome

^r 1 Pet. ii. 22. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Heb. vii. 27. 1 Pet. i. 19. John i. 29. Rev. xiii. 8. Heb. ix. 14.

^s Colos. ii. 14. Matt. xx. 28. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. iii. 25.

^t Eph. ii. 13, 15, 16.

in the sight of a God, *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?* His blood is said to *wash us, to cleanse us from all sin, to purge our consciences from dead works*^u; we are said to be (like the things purified from legal uncleanness heretofore) *sprinkled and sanctified by this blood of the covenant*, and by that *will of God* which removed the many imperfect levitical purifications, that He might *establish this one perfect evangelical purification, even the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*^x, as the Scripture now before us expressly asserts.

Once more: As the dire effects of sin are by no images more strongly represented than by those of wounds and putrifying sores, of sickness, and death; so neither are the benefits of our Lord's passion at any time more sensibly expressed than by His *stripes healing us, by His quickening them that are dead in trespasses and sins, and our living in and by Him Who died for us*^y. And to shew that the virtue of this spiritual restorative knows no bounds, He is said to *justify men from all things, from which they could not be justified by any former dispensation, and to save even the chief of sinners*^z.

Thus much, I conceive, may very well suffice for proving the death of Christ not only a true, but a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for sin. It only remains now, that I shew this sacrifice and satisfaction to have consisted strictly in that which makes

^u Hab. i. 13. Rev. i. v. 1 John i. 7. Heb. ix. 14. x. 29.

^x Heb. x. 9, 10.

^y 1 Pet. ii. 24. Eph. ii. 1. 1 Thes. v. x.

^z Acts xiii. 39. 1 Tim. i. 15.

the principal subject of our devotions this day, His dying upon the cross for us.

Now, for a right understanding of this matter, we must again be beholden to the guidance of those rites and offices so often referred to in this Epistle; such as were peculiar to the Jews' yearly solemnity on the great day of atonement. But we must in the contemplation of those rites be sure to take this caution along with us—that our Lord is to be considered in a double capacity: as the Sacrifice offered, and as the Priest offering it. And therefore care must be had to distinguish between these two relations; between the acts and effects proper to Him in the one, and in the other of these qualities. These were indeed united in one and the same Person at the time of this oblation; but they remained perfectly distinct, and had different subjects in every other oblation whatsoever.

Now, at that day of expiation only, the sin-offerings were commanded to be slain by the high priest's own hand; and this was an emblem as significant as the condition of the thing would bear, of our great High Priest and Sin-Offering both *laying down His own life*, and voluntarily *offering up Himself for us*. Of the blood of those sacrifices the levitical high priest was to bring part into the holy place: which containing the symbols of God's more special presence and favour was, as you have seen before, a figure of heaven. Christ, therefore, by ascending into heaven with His crucified body performed an act exactly correspondent to that of the high priest, when carrying the blood of the sin-offering into the holy

place ; and therefore He is observed to have performed this part of His sacerdotal office, with the difference of one or two very material circumstances to our advantage. For whereas that figurative sanctuary was entered with the *blood of others* (of calves and goats) *yearly* ; He entered into the true, the heavenly sanctuary *once* only, and then *with His own blood*.

The question now arising from hence is, whether the atonement under the law were actually made by the blood of the sacrifice, when slain in the outward tabernacle, or when brought and sprinkled within the veil : and in proportion, whether the sins of men, under the gospel, be expiated by the death of Christ's body on the cross, or, by exhibiting that crucified body before His Father in heaven.

For resolving this doubt, let it be considered in what capacity the high-priest entered the holy place ; why he entered into it but once a year ; and why then not without blood.

First, then it is manifest, that on the day of atonement the high priest went twice into the holy place : —once with the blood of the bullock, which was slain as a sin-offering for himself and for his house, the second time with the blood of the goat, which was slain as a sin-offering for the people^a. Now, by bringing in the blood on the first occasion was signified the remission of his own sins, and of theirs who assisted in the service of the altar ; and herein he became the representative of the priestly order, and

^a Levit. xvi. 12, 13, 14.

qualified to proceed in offering for others : and thus purged, he wore the figure of that Great High Priest, Whose perfect innocence exempted Him from a double entrance ; as not needing to offer for Himself, in order to render Him capable of being accepted for others ^b. But the second time he entered, he sustained a more public character ; representing the whole congregation, who virtually, and in the construction of the law, entered together with him. And, in this regard, he resembled our Jesus ; *by Whose blood* (as we have heard this morning) *we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*

Secondly, The high priest entering but once (that is one day only) in the year, was never intended to prove that no sacrifices for sin offered on any other day, when he did not enter were effectual for remission ; for the contrary is manifest from the law itself. But the difference is, that those other sacrifices were occasional and *personal* ; and thus far they availed, that the parties offering them were purified from those *particular* transgressions then confessed, and restored to all the privileges of communion with God in His worship. But the effect of the sacrifices offered on the day of atonement, and of those only, was *general* ; and extended to the benefit of the *whole body* of the people. These therefore were the most express image of a Sacrifice to be offered for the sins of *all mankind*. And a year being a perfect revolution of time, in which all nature seems to have finished its course, the

^b Levit. xvi. 15.

allowing this solemn atonement to be yearly and no more, was the best intimation which that economy was capable of giving, that this great Sacrifice should be offered *but once*, and that it should suffice to *perfect for ever* the persons *sanctified by it*.

Thirdly, The high priest, even at that solemn day, was not allowed to enter into the holy place without blood. By being denied familiar and constant access to the presence of God was intimated that state of guilt, which rendered men unworthy to approach Him. By being allowed it after the slaying of the sin-offering is signified the removal of that guilt and unworthiness, in consequence of God's acceptance of the sacrifice. So that this access supposes an expiation; and the bringing in of the blood is not the making such expiation, but the evidence of one already made. This is the type: and the antitype exactly answers it. Human nature while polluted by sin was incapable of entering heaven; our Lord by suffering in this nature hath procured to it immortality, and admittance thither. He entered there as our common representative; and by that entrance He testifies the expiation finished; for so it must be, or ever our nature could gain access thither. The ascent then to, and residence of our nature in heaven is an argument that God is fully reconciled. The crucified body of our Lord dwelling for ever with God is a continual exhibiting of the merits and efficacy of His sacrifice; but the act of entering is not properly a sacrificial act in Christ, or of an expiatory nature; farther than it declares the sacrifice, and the power of it. It is indeed an act of triumph after, and reward for having offered

Himself up in this quality. The death of our Lord on the cross answers to the death of the sin-offering at the altar. The remission is obtained by means of, and consequently is to be dated from the time of shedding the blood. Hence is our Saviour said to *rise again for our justification*^c. And how could that be said of Him, if we were not justified till some time after He rose; and if no pardon were obtained till His ascent into heaven? Hence it is said, that the *blood of the cross made our peace*; and that in the cross, (or His body upon it, as some understand that passage) He defeated and *triumphed over* the enemies of our souls. Hence again we read, that *after He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*^d: and, in the very scripture I am upon, that He *after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God*. And, *lastly*, hence, we may reasonably presume, He expired upon the cross with those significant words in His mouth, *It is finished*. Of which more in the following service for this day.

In the meanwhile I only add, that what hath been here advanced commits no violence at all upon those texts where Christ's eternal priesthood is asserted; for *sacrificing*, though a part, was yet never the whole of the priestly character. *Blessing* and *intercession* are as essential branches of it as the other. And these our Lord continues to discharge with such fulness of power, as not to be an humble supplicant for, but the *Author and Giver of salvation*. He is the bestower

Rom. iv. 25.

^d Col. iii. 1. Heb. i. 3,

(and not the asker only) of blessings to *them* for whom He vouchsafes to intercede. And an eternal Priest He thus far is, with regard to the sacrificing part too, as He hath by that one offering for sin put an utter end to, and rendered all repetition of such sacrifices not only needless, but unsafe and sinful.

Upon the whole matter it is very obvious what mighty consolations we may, we ought to take, even in the sad solemnity of this day. What tears of joy are fit to be mingled with those of grief and penitence! The latter we should be stupid and inhuman not to pay to the dismal agonies of our dearest Master; the former we should be unthankful and cruel to ourselves not to give to the happy effects of the misery which He so graciously condescended to undergo for us. But to make both effectual let us, inflamed with zeal, and gratitude, and love unfeigned, endeavour for our own particular, and most devoutly beg for others, (as the best of churches teaches us) that the innumerable benefits of this blood-shedding may have their full extent, and free course; that *we, and the whole church of Christ, may receive remission of sins*, and all the other blessed effects of His passion. That He, *Who hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world*, would cause His way to be known, and shew His saving health to the yet dark and unbelieving nations; and that all who do already know it may walk worthy of it. And Oh that the death this day tasted for every man may be effectual to the saving of all men! Even so, blessed Jesus, *by Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, good Lord deliver us.*

THE GOSPEL.

ST. JOHN XIX. 1.

THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him: but

the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let This man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a King speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour : and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King. But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King ? The chief priests answered, we have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away. And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha : where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews : for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city : and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews ; but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also His coat : now the coat

was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the sol-

diers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him Whom they pierced.

COMMENT.

THE service of the church and the scriptures already handled have brought us down to the last act of our blessed Saviour's sufferings, and the particular manner of His expiring upon the cross. These therefore shall make the subject of our present meditation, according to the description given in the chapter now before us, (ver. 28, 29, 30.) viz. that Jesus (feeling Himself afflicted with a vehement drought usual upon the approach of death, but especially in that kind of death where extremity of pain, and the loss of blood exhaust the spirits in a more than ordinary degree) complained of thirst : for the quenching whereof when His insulting enemies offered Him vinegar to drink, He meekly submitted to their cruel mockery ; and having moistened His holy mouth with it said, *It is finished* ; after which He presently *bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.*

There are two things especially observable from hence, which require our very attentive consideration.

First, The true importance of that saying, *It is finished*; and,

Secondly, The particular manner of our Lord's dying. These I shall first explain, and then deduce from them some proper reflections.

I begin with the *former*; the true importance of that saying, *It is finished*.

1. The *first* and most obvious interpretation seems to regard the prophecies concerning Christ. Those were so full and express, that there was not any one material circumstance, in this great concluding scene of His life especially, which had not been most exactly foretold many ages before. This shewed that all these things, however casual they might appear when they happened, were yet conducted all along by a wise and steady Providence, Which so over-ruled the wills, the malice, and the wickedness of men, as to bring about what God had determined, and what none but He could have signified should be, so long before they came to pass. This was a method very agreeable to the design of Almighty God; Whose revelations and dealings all tended to the mystery of man's redemption: that great and glorious work, in which His divine perfections should be most eminently conspicuous—which was of greatest consequence to the world—and which He therefore kept constantly in view, and to which He made all other dispensations subservient.

This is the very reason why the apostles, in all their arguings with the Jews, insist so much upon the topic of prophecies: because, according to the Jews' own principles, that person was to be looked

upon as the true Messiah, in whom these predictions were manifestly and punctually accomplished. Hence St. John, ver. 28, takes notice, that Jesus therefore said *I thirst, that the Scripture might be fulfilled*. The other prophecies relating to this matter, such as *being betrayed by His friend and companion, forsaken by His kindred and acquaintance, having His hands and His feet pierced, His garments parted, and lots cast upon His vesture*, had all been made good already.

But there remained one more still; one acknowledged to belong to this matter: for David complaining of the barbarity of his enemies says, they were so far from extending their relief, or shewing any compassion to what he endured, that on the contrary they exasperated, and triumphed in his sufferings. This pitiless cruelty he expresses, by *giving him gall to eat, and when he was thirsty, giving him vinegar to drink*°. Now David was confessed to be a type of Christ; and what he uttered upon these melancholy occasions had confessedly a higher and farther meaning than his own personal afflictions; and therefore it was necessary for the evangelist to shew, that this also was really and literally true of Christ; and consequently those words had not yet received their utmost completion. So that when our Lord, upon receiving the vinegar, said *It is finished*, we may reasonably understand Him thus;—that all the other predictions of things antecedent to His death had met with events answerable to them before—there was

° Psal. lxxix. 21.

but one more unfinished ; and, since this too had been punctually made good by the vinegar brought Him to quench His thirst with in that last extremity, no circumstance of His sufferings was now omitted, whereby the prophets had distinguished and pointed Him out to the Jews. Thus far all was managed in most exact order. And therefore the next thing He had to do was to die: which accordingly He did forthwith, for hereupon *He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.*

2. *Secondly*, This saying of our blessed Lord is of great propriety and significance if applied, as it may very reasonably be, to the types and figures of the Jewish law: for the law was a dispensation in the very nature and design of it imperfect, and preparatory to a more excellent one afterwards. This argument (as we have had frequent occasions to observe) is admirably made out in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the apostle insists upon it, that even the most eminent places and persons, the most remarkable blessings and punishments in the civil capacity of the Jews, had a secret mystery, a distant prospect and meaning; but, that the ceremonial part of their worship was entirely made up of shadow and image: in short, that Jesus Christ and His gospel, what He did, and taught, and suffered, was the real end and substance, the entire and intended accomplishment, which Almighty God had in view when He instituted those carnal ordinances, and darker significations of His will, and truly acceptable worship. This was most eminently the case in that branch of their service by which they made the nearest approaches to

Almighty God, and from whence they derived the greatest confidence in His favour:—their sacrifices, I mean; and those of them especially, which were appointed, and accepted by way of expiation for sin. And yet you have seen that the apostle makes it exceedingly clear, upon their own principles, that none of those sacrifices could be a just ground of confidence to sinners; that it was not possible they should have any efficacy of their own to the purposes they used them for^f. The power of taking away sin is a privilege, which not only the nature of the thing rendered them incapable of, but the frequent and daily repetition of the same sacrifices gave plain intimation of their being defective in: and therefore this was peculiar to another sacrifice, which was, and needed to be offered but once only: because this High Priest, *Who takes away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*, hath by that *one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified*. This is part of the apostle's argument to the Hebrews in his ninth and tenth chapters^g. But, withal, since Christ did not effect that great work till the *end of the world*; that is, till God made the last declaration of Himself to mankind, and settled an institution, in the place whereof no other was to succeed; it was not expedient that the other antecedent and more imperfect dispensations should keep men void of all comfort and hope. These shewed men their disease and their misery; and if they could not apply, yet it was fit they should point out at least, and

^f Wednesday this week, and this day.

^g Heb. ix. 26. x. 14.

give them some prospect of their remedy. Almighty God therefore, in His wisdom and compassion, seems to have instituted sacrifices to shew that He was not implacable ; that He would admit of a ransom and proxy, and one day accept innocent blood, as an atonement for the guilt of those that had offended Him. Thus *the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world* ; not only in the intention and decree of His Father, but virtually in every one of those lambs appointed and accepted for the sins of those who lived before this only expiatory Sacrifice was actually offered upon the altar of the cross. But when that had been done, and the wrath of God was effectually appeased, there was an end of all bloody sacrifices. The substance was come, and the shadows were done away ; there was no farther use of these ; and as useless for the future they ceased of themselves : and therefore, in this sense too, our Saviour might most truly say *It is finished* ; because the legal expiations had now attained their full completion in the death He just then was about to undergo, and in the soul which He voluntarily poured out as an innocent, unblemished, a perfect and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the transgressions of the whole world. And this leads us likewise to consider these words in a

3. *Third* most comfortable sense, as they import, that the great work of man's redemption, and all that was necessary for reconciling sinners to their incensed God, had been exactly and punctually performed by Christ suffering in the stead, and for the sake of sinners. By this we are not however to understand, that Christ endured the very same punishments in

kind and measure, which by the just decree of God were due to wilful and impenitent offenders. For these could be inflicted upon such only as had offended in their own persons. St. Peter urges the necessity of our Lord's resurrection, from the impossibility of His being holden of the pains of death^b; and if His innocences delivered Him from the power of temporal, much more did it exempt Him from that of eternal death. The torments of the damned are without end, without hope; but everlasting misery and despair could never be consistent, either with the condition of One Who had never deserved them, or with the assurance of releasing His brethren from them. These are the consequences of disobedience and rebellion against God: but the sufferings of Jesus were most pleasing to God; an unexampled proof of His entire obedience in the highest and most difficult instance of submission; an act of duty and unspeakable charity; and so far from incurring His irreconcilable displeasure, that for this very cause *God hath highly exalted Him*ⁱ. This purchased a reward for His human nature, and peace for those who, but for His sake, could not be pardoned and reconciled.

It is true, God *bruised Him sorely in the day of His fierce anger*; but He never loved Him at any time more tenderly than when He was pleased thus to wound Him: He smote Him not for any misdemeanors of His own in His private capacity, but for ours which, in His public capacity as the common representative of sinful mankind, He had taken upon Him-

^a Acts ii. 24.

ⁱ Phil. ii. 9.

self. It was our burden which He carried, our iniquities for which He was chastised, and the stripes laid upon Him made such deep impression, that by the anguish of His wounds we might be healed. Now, in order to this there was no need that the very same pains, in every point, should be inflicted upon Him, which, had not He submitted to suffer for us, we must ourselves have suffered; but it was only necessary, that the injuries and affronts offered to the Divine Justice by the provocations of wicked men should receive a sufficient compensation—that the honour of God and His laws should be vindicated, and sin made as terrible and full of discouragement as it could possibly have been, though no such methods of mercy had been used to deliver us from the curse and condemnation of it. Now all these ends were fully satisfied by the Son of God condescending to suffer in our stead. Whatever was wanting in the duration or the extremity of those sufferings was abundantly made up by the dignity of the Person. This rendered Him capable of purging our consciences by His sacrifice, because He offered Himself to God through the *Eternal Spirit* ^k, that is, the Divine united to our human nature.

That union exalted the value of this oblation to an infinite degree, and paid a ransom to offended Justice of more worth than a hundred thousand worlds: that gave men a clear proof how hateful sin is to God, Who would not be prevailed with to remit it upon easier terms than the agonies and death of His only

^k Heb. ix. 14.

Son: that shewed how dreadful consequences they are to expect from their own faults, when even this most holy, this entirely beloved, this Divine Person, Who did not, could not know any sin, had undergone such bitter things for the sins of others: and lastly, this leaves the laws of God in their full force and obligation still; since the matter is so ordered, that none but the penitent and the virtuous shall ever reap any benefit by this passion. So that, though all have now leave to hope, and great encouragement to obey; yet none have the least shadow of pretence for presumption, and neglect of their duty. For the end of those who continue in wickedness is in no degree better, nay, in some respects it is infinitely worse, than if Christ had never died at all. *Thus have mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other*¹, in the wonderful contrivance of man's redemption: and this signification of these words pronounced by our Saviour here corresponds exactly with those at the 17th chap. ver. 4, 5. *I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do: And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self.* For so likewise here, when He had run through all the bitter stages of His passion, endured every pain, sustained every conflict that was necessary, and acquitted Himself as became Him in them all; having now no longer business for life, He immediately resigned it: which brings me to the

II. *Second thing observable in the text; the parti-*

¹ Psal. lxxxv. 10.

cular manner of our Saviour's expiring upon the cross, as it is expressed in the last clause of the 30th verse, *and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.* The original phrase may denote a delivering up, or, as Himself expressed it, a committing of His spirit into the hands of God, as a sacred trust to be restored again and united to His body at the time prefixed by His Own infinite wisdom^m; and plainly implies such a dissolution, and actual separation of soul and body, as every common man undergoes when he dies. But herein is a remarkable difference,—that what is in other men the effect of necessity, was in Jesus a voluntary act, and the effect of His Own free choice. Hence the generality of interpreters have thought, that St. John takes notice that Christ *bowed His Head before He gave up the ghost*; whereas in common cases, the falling of the head follows after the breath's going out of the body. Hence also St. Mark observes, that Jesus crying out with so loud and strong a voice, immediately before His expiring, was one reason that moved the centurion to think Him an extraordinary person: for this shewed that nature was not quite spent in Him; and that His death did not come on by such gradual and unavoidable decays as it usually does, when the voice is stopped and lost, and all the powers falter and languish, some time before the soul's departure from its fleshly tabernacle. Accordingly we find, that when the soldiers came to take down the bodies from the cross, they found Him dead, before those two others that were crucified with

^m Luke xxiii. 46.

Him ; and that when Joseph came to beg the body of Jesus, Pilate wondered to hear that He was dead so soon : and would not grant that request, till he had first satisfied himself of the truth of it by inquiring of the officer, who attended the execution.

Of all which a very probable account may be, not only that the excess of His pain and sorrow had tired out nature, and hastened His death ; but that He, Who, as Himself professes, had *power to lay down His life*^a, and could not have it taken from Him without His Own permission and consent, did lay it down at such a time as Himself saw convenient. Every step in this last act of His life was taken regularly, and with deliberation. He bore a constant regard to all the mysterious purposes of this important death. He would not die till they were all fulfilled ; and when they were so, He would not live any longer, because there was no occasion that required He should. Never was there, never can there be such a death in any instance ; so perfectly free, so entirely at the person's own disposal : for He, Who struck His enemies down to the ground with His majestic presence, and afterwards gave them leave to apprehend Him, could likewise, if He had so pleased, have come down from the cross. He could have continued insensible to all the pains of it ; He could have survived the sharpest anguish ; and, had He not suspended His Divine power, death itself could not have taken hold on Him, nor have bound this strong man, this infinitely more than man in those chains, which

^a John x. 18.

He therefore submitted to, that He might break and burst them asunder shortly after in a more glorious and triumphant manner. Such was the decease of our blessed Redeemer; so voluntary and entirely His own; so wise and wonderful in every circumstance; so victorious, even in that part of it which His enemies thought Him vanquished by; so full of matter, so full of comfort is that dying word of the blessed Jesus, treated of under my first head: so justly might He then, so joyfully may every Christian now cry out, *It is finished.*

The remainder of my discourse shall now be employed in the reflections arising from these considerations—that we do by no means remember this death like Christians indeed, if we do not feel ourselves very sensibly affected with it.

Here then we may perceive how it came to pass, that this death was an act so noble and generous in itself, and so exceedingly beneficial to us: for therefore is it a meritorious, because not only an invaluable, but a willing Sacrifice—therefore was this act of obedience so well pleasing to His Father; because even in the most difficult and painful instances it proceeded not from constraint, but from full consent and free choice. Upon this account His love to wretched man is so unspeakably tender and great; because it was in His power to have refused the giving us such costly proofs of His kindness. But though these are subjects upon which I might very seasonably and pathetically enlarge; yet having been upon them lately, that which I rather choose to say at present is, that, by such a chosen and cheerful submission to die for

our sakes, our Lord hath set us a pattern, how we ought to behave ourselves to Him in return for such marvellous compassion and love. That we should think nothing too much to do, nothing too grievous to suffer for a Saviour, Who of His Own accord and mere grace hath done and suffered so much for us. To all persons who retain any spark of ingenuousness, and have not sinned away all the principles of natural religion, nothing can be more clear and self-evident, than that they are bound to shew themselves sensible of, and make what requital they can for kindnesses received. This is the ground of that significant expression used by St. Paul, *the love of Christ constraineth us to obedience*°. And our blessed Saviour takes notice, that neither the darkness of the heathens, nor the vicious lives of the publicans had extinguished that principle of *loving those that loved them*°. Shall Christians then be wanting in so plain a duty? Christians, who have the brightest light to walk by, and are under the influence of the most powerful, most engaging example? For, what religion ever carried the points of love and gratitude to so noble a height? What ever presented mankind with a pattern, that can pretend to bear any manner of proportion to the great, the unspeakable things, our Master and Benefactor hath done for us? If we observe the kindness itself, the Person Who did it, and the persons for whom it was done, every circumstance is full of wonder and amazement. That God, Who is by nature incapable of suffering and death, should

° 2 Cor. v. 14.

° Matt. v. 46.

condescend to become mortal man, to qualify Himself for enduring the bitterest afflictions ; that He should do this for enemies and rebels, (for such are wretched sinners ;) that the miseries of those who had most obstinately provoked and injured Him, and merited His utmost indignation and wrath, should move His compassion to save their souls at the expense of His Own life ; that in the midst of sorrows and agonies, of pains and torture, He should still persevere in this most gracious purpose, and not accept a deliverance till He had finished this laborious undertaking ; that He should embrace poverty and hardship, reproach and ignominy, bodily anguish and death with a ready and cheerful mind, when all the powers of hell could not have compelled Him to one single pang ; this is such an instance of pity and friendship, as no tenderness ever did, or can compare with. And therefore we are certainly of all creatures the most insensible, the most inexcusable, if we do not take care to apply this example very warmly to our consciences ; if we read this history of our dearest Redeemer's passion without very moving impressions ; if we do not urge every branch of it home, and render it as effectual as it is designed and qualified to be, for exciting in us the most irreconcilable hatred against sin, and kindling the most vigorous and ardent affection for our dying Saviour ; I say again, such a hatred of sin, and such love of God and Christ, as this account is well qualified to excite in us. For what branch of our duty is there, for which the sufferings of the Blessed Jesus, when carefully considered, do not furnish the strongest motives and the

most unanswerable arguments? He commands us to repent of, that is, to be sorry for our past faults, and to forsake them for the time to come. And can we read the doleful story of this day, can we reflect that they were our iniquities for which He was bruised, our transgressions for which He was wounded in the day of God's fierce anger, without a deep and hearty remorse? Can we think that we contributed to His agonies and grief, that the malicious Jews and barbarous soldiers were only the instruments of cruelty, but every sinful man in part the cause of all He suffered; and think it without aching hearts, and overflowing eyes; without confusion of face, and a multitude of self-condemning reproaches? Can we behold our dear Lord's temples pierced with thorns, His holy face besmeared with blood, His body torn with scourges, nailed to the cross, hanging there in convulsions, thirsting, fainting, bleeding, dying in pity to us; and can we suffer ourselves to be familiar with, and fond of those very lusts, which injured, disgraced, tormented, and slew our best Friend, and most generous Benefactor? Surely, if men have any gratitude, if any bowels, this prospect, lively represented to their minds, must needs check their wildest career, and damp the hottest flames of vicious inclinations. Surely this thought would be a preservative sufficient against those evil practices, which, we are told, do even now grieve this Saviour; and men must be ashamed to do despite to such a Friend, and crucify the Son of God afresh, by enslaving themselves to those corrupt affections, from whose tyranny He died to deliver them. He hath

told us, that the proof He expects of our loving Him is to *keep His commandments*[†]; and these are such commandments as it would be our duty and interest to keep, though He had never suffered for us: and shall we shew less cheerfulness in seeking our own happiness, than He did in taking upon Himself our misery and punishment? Did he most willingly die for us, and shall not we be content to live to Him? To Him did I say? nay to ourselves: since it is not His, but our advantage that He seeks in ordering us to be holy and good men. It may be, we shall find our duty incumbered with some difficulties: but what are our sharpest trials in comparison of His? or how can any submission deserve to be named with that most condescending resignation, whereby Christ offered Himself freely to that sorrow, and shame, and pain, which He had no obligation to endure? He would not decline death in its most deformed and frightful shape; He would not spare Himself one agony that might conduce to the perfecting our salvation; He exposed His innocence to the punishments He never deserved: and shall we grudge the obedience which the condition of servants and creatures lays upon us?—shall we resist the will of God concerning us, and murmur at the due reward, nay much less than the due reward of our evil deeds? He does indeed require, that we forsake all and follow Him, that we lay down our lives for His sake: but it is very seldom that He calls men to this last experiment of their sincerity and constancy. And yet if it

[†] John xiv. 15.

were frequent, if it were sure to be the case of every common Christian, is not even this a reasonable case? Is it not a very poor return to what He hath done before us, and for us? We cannot say with Him, we have power to lay down our lives; for these lives are not our own; they are God's gift, and always in His disposal: but He had a right to dispose of His. He could not have been mortal, had He not chosen to be so. His happiness was perfect before, and received no addition by all the miseries He endured for lost man: and when He chose a death for our advantage, which He was not liable to originally, shall not we submit to the manner of dying which God sees fittest, when die in some manner we unavoidably must? Shall we not be satisfied to exchange a worse life for a better; when, bad as it is, we must otherwise part with it for a worse? So highly reasonable are even the hardest conditions of a Christian's obedience; so prevalent would a serious consideration of our Lord's love and sufferings prove, to reconcile us to those difficulties, at which flesh and blood are most apt to start and give back.

The proper use of this week's devotions, therefore, is to inflame our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to arm us with patience, to encourage our perseverance to the end; to put us in mind that we, like Him, can only then lay down our heads with comfort, when we can say *it is finished*: when we measure our life, not by the length and number of our days, but by the business and design of it. No death can be hasty or unseasonable, which comes when a man hath satisfied the ends he lived for. No life is long

which determines before the purposes of living are made good, and its work done: but happy, happy they, who after the most distressed, the most laborious, the most despised instances of their virtue, can sing this song of triumph to themselves; that they have been faithful in their charge, and done that which it was their duty to do! If such partake in the afflictions, and reproaches, and death of their Saviour, they shall assuredly be recompensed by partaking in His resurrection; and, when they give up the ghost, shall immediately enter into the joy of This their Crucified Lord.

EASTER EVEN.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continually mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection, for His merits Who died and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

* Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, 11, 12. Gal. ii. 20. vi. 14. Col. ii. 11, 12.

THE EPISTLE.

1 PET. III. 17.

Paraphrase.

17 It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the

18 Of which suffering Christ hath left us a pattern, Who died for the establishing an access to and friendship with God for sinful men, and being perfectly innocent, took the punishment of our sins upon Him: but that body of His which thus died, was raised again by that Divine Spirit:

20 Which was always urging wicked men to repentance; and by the impulse whereof Noah preached repentance to the old world, and by building the ark warned them of the judgment of God in the approaching deluge.

21 And his family saved by the ark swimming on the water was a type of the church of Christ, saved by the sacrament of baptism. But as *there it was*

1 PET. III. 17.

Paraphrase.

answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

not the water, or the ark, but the righteousness and obedience of Noah that preserved him; so neither *here* is it the water which cleanses the flesh, but the covenant on this occasion solemnly stipulated, and the faithful observance of it, that saves us in baptism. The efficacy of which sacrament for our justification is assured to us by our Lord's rising again:

22 Who, from and for His sufferings and humiliation here below, is now with His human body vested with supreme authority in heaven, and ruler of the whole intellectual world. For of what degree or dignity soever the spirits that compose it be, all of them are entirely subject to His government.

 COMMENT.

THE Epistle for the day, like the day itself, presents to our minds two different views. The one, a retrospect upon our dying, the other, a most comfortable prospect upon our risen Lord. With regard to the former, we are by His example excited to patience in our sufferings; even when those sufferings are extreme and unjust. With regard to the latter, we are in-

formed, that our Lord returned to life by virtue of that Eternal Spirit, Which long before His incarnation strove with sinful men by seasonable instructions and warnings, to prevent the dismal consequences of a God provoked to anger. The inefficacy of which good office brought destruction upon all the old world, except one obedient family, by the sweeping of a deluge, dreadful and general as the impieties that had let it in upon them.

The deliverance we likewise learn from hence to have been a figure of the sacrament of baptism; as the ark containing Noah and his family was a figure of the church. None were then preserved, whom that ark did not bear upon the water; in like manner, it is by baptism, and in the church only, that men can now be (orderly) saved from their sins here, and everlasting death hereafter. The efficacy of this sacrament is however ascribed not to the outward element applied to the body, but to the inward disposition of the mind in them who are received by it into this spiritual ark. This disposition is to be expressed by declarations of the party's willingness to enter into covenant with God, and to expect salvation upon the terms of the gospel: a part of baptism so necessary, that it does not appear that it anciently was, or that it ever ought to be administered without such declaration. And therefore such consent is rightly demanded of all baptized persons; expected from all of years and discretion to be given by themselves; accepted for infants by the charity of the church, from sureties in their name; but required to be personally ratified by these also, in the rite of

Confirmation, at a time when they are capable of contracting for their part of this covenant.

The salvation attained by thus entering into covenant with God, is most rightfully ascribed here to our Lord's resurrection. That being the evidence, that the sins He died for were fully expiated, and that immortality was restored to the nature in which He died. The release of our Surety was in all reasonable construction an acknowledgment, that our debt was fully satisfied : and a sufficient foundation for the firmest faith in the *merits of Him Who died, and was buried, and rose again for us.*

But faith alone, we know, is not sufficient. Every important article of the Christian religion ought to have a powerful influence upon our practice. And therefore, neither do we consider, nor believe our Lord's burial aright, unless that also be imitated and drawn into example. It is a pious observation frequent among the fathers, that every one of the great lines in the scheme of our redemption was set for us to copy after ; and, that the principal actions of our blessed Saviour are to be looked on, not only as historical, but full of mystical instruction, and intimations of somewhat to be done by every Christian too, in correspondence with their great Master. Nor is this to be thought a flight of warm zeal. For Scripture itself fully justifies that notion ; which is indeed the plain import of several passages to the Romans, Galatians, and Colossians.

Now, as at other times the apostle enlarges concerning our *being crucified, dying, and rising again with Christ* ; so, in the sixth to the Romans he men-

tions, *being buried with Christ by baptism into death*: (ver. 4;) and again, in the second to the Colossians, *buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him*. (Ver. 12.)

These expressions, whatever allusion they may have to that ceremony used in hotter climates, of immersing the body of the baptized person entirely, (which answers to the burial of Christ, as emerging out of the water again resembles His rising out of the grave), yet do they certainly imply a great deal more. Our sins are said to be *borne by Christ in His own body on the tree*: *The body of sin to be crucified with Him*; and by parity of reason to be buried in His grave; As therefore, in the professions of faith made at baptism every Christian declares his belief, that the body of Christ was really dead and buried; so he obliges himself to effect that upon his own sins and lusts, which actually passed upon Christ's natural body. That is, to mortify and kill his corrupt affections and desires; and not suffer them to act, and move, and draw him into sin; any more than the carcase, when the soul is gone, and it is laid into the earth, can any longer perform the offices of a living and animated body. And as the change of a man from evil to good consists, in first *ceasing to do evil*, and then *learning to do well*; so we must first of all *put off the old man*, and extinguish the principles of corruption and sin in our hearts, before we can proceed to virtuous dispositions and actions, and be moved by the principles of a new and spiritual life. The former of these is

implied by *dying to sin*, and *dying with Christ*; as the latter is denoted by being *risen with Him*, and *quickenened to righteousness* and true holiness by the *same Spirit Which raised Christ from the dead*^a. As therefore the death of Christ is amply confirmed by His being buried; so must we, in proportion, so effectually put off our lusts and corruptions, as to shew that they have no longer any life or power left in us. As, again, His death and burial led to His resurrection, without which they had not answered the purpose of His dying; so, to forsake our old sins, and bury them in His grave, does not answer the character of Christians, unless we complete the work by living after another manner, and testify the power of His Spirit in us by a new, and pure, and holy conversation. And, because this is what every one engages for when he enters *into covenant with Christ by baptism*, therefore every Christian is said to be *buried and to rise with Him* in that holy sacrament. Let us then look upon ourselves in the circumstances, wherein Christ is represented this day:—dead to our trespasses and sins, as He was to the world; buried as He was; to shew there are no remains of our former wicked life in us. As He *died once* only, to *return no more to corruption*^b, so let our repentance, and the forsaking of our sins be without any wilful relapse: for otherwise we do not die, as He did, *once for all*: we incur the absurdity of moving when we are dead, and of being buried alive, so long as our

^a Rom. vi. 8, 10, 11. Col. iii. 1. Rom. viii. 11.

^b Rom. vi. 10. Acts xiii. 34.

corruptions live in us. And as He rose again to live for ever, so let us enter upon a new course, to last as long as ourselves do upon earth, and to be perfected by a glorious and blessed immortality in heaven.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. MATT. XXVII. 57.

WHEN the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that That deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and

made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

COMMENT.

It is worth our observation, that the evangelists are not more circumstantial in any particular relating to our blessed Saviour, than in that part which concerns His burial. This seems to be done, not so much for the sake of any consequence that action is of, considered apart by itself; as for the service it does to the proof of some things which went before, and followed after it. For the two great points of the Christian religion being the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it was necessary that all possible conviction should be given to the world of these two most important passages. Were we not well assured of His being really dead, we could not be certain that an atonement was made for the sins of the world; and had we any reasonable ground to doubt the truth of His resurrection, we could not depend upon that atonement being accepted. Now what the Holy Spirit hath thought fit to record of His burial, is so ordered as to leave no just suspicion, either that our Lord's body was not actually dead, or that the same body which so died was not actually restored to life again. This is what the Gospel for the day gives very full evidence of; especially when considered with its parallel texts in the other evangelists; which I shall call to my assistance in such a manner, as may best conduce to the making both this death, and re-

surrection of our Lord beyond all contradiction clear, from His burial now before us.

Now here we must observe,

- I. *First*, The persons concerned in this action; and
- II. *Secondly*, The several circumstances of the action itself. After which,
- III. *Thirdly*, I shall leave the whole upon you, with some practical inferences.

I. I begin with the persons concerned in this action, the principal of which was Joseph of Arimathea; of whom the Gospel gives us this farther description—that he was a *rich man*, and an *honourable counsellor*, a *just man* and a *good*; one who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them who persecuted and condemned Jesus to death; but was himself a *disciple of His*, though *secretly*, for fear of the Jews*. In all which passages, there is something material; as I shall shew, by speaking very briefly to each of them as they lie in order.

His riches and honourable station are mentioned, not out of any vanity and ostentation that a person of so considerable a figure should pay respect to the body of our blessed Master, but partly to intimate the interest and easy access he found with Him; and partly to shew how strangely God brought about an ancient prophecy concerning the Messiah, that notwithstanding the infamous manner of His dying, He

* Matt. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 43. Luke xxiii. 50, 51. John xix. 38.

should yet *make His grave with the rich at His death* *. Now this in itself was a most unlikely thing; for the bodies of them that were crucified did by the Roman laws hang upon the gibbet, exposed to all the injuries of weather, and a prey for ravenous beasts and fowls of the air. And though the Jewish institution did not allow of this severity to the dead; yet did they usually bury their malefactors in some public, neglected, and ignominious place *. Hence the Jews themselves besought Pilate that all the bodies might be taken away, to prevent the profanation of their great festival, and the breach of God's ordinance, by their continuing upon the cursed tree. And thus they disposed of the two thieves in all probability, as was usual in all other cases of this nature. But the making a distinction between them and Jesus, Who was crucified with them, was the act of Joseph. He applied himself to the governor, in whose disposal the bodies of executed persons were; and he treated it with that becoming honour, which we shall have occasion to observe by and by.

In the meanwhile we are to take notice, that the next character under which we find him is that of a *counsellor*. Which denotes him to have been a member of the Jewish sanhedrim; that very assembly of chief priests and rulers which laid wait for Jesus; which charged Him with blasphemy; which used Him with so much cruelty and contempt; which, when their own power could not extend to inflict that death determined for the Messiah, arraigned Him of

* Isaiah liii. 9.

* Deut. xxi. 23.

sedition before Pilate; and when he saw through the thinness of this frivolous pretence and was disposed to release Him, instigated the people to accept of a robber and a murderer, and to demand that He might be crucified. So that when the apostles had told us that this person was one of that body, it was but necessary to acquit him from the imputation of the common guilt; to satisfy the world that, though he was of them, he did not act with them. And for this reason St. Luke clears him of having any hand in their villainies, and distinguishes him from his wicked fellows by saying, that *he was a good man and a just*; and had not consented to the counsel and deed of the rest. Nay, St. Matthew adds here, that *he himself was Jesus' disciple*; but yet with some degree of infirmity; for St. John tells us, it *was secretly, for fear of the Jews*. Many such, he tells us, there were among the chief rulers, who were convinced by His doctrine and miracles. But they kept their opinion to themselves, and had not the courage to own it publicly.

How long the rest walked under this disguise we know not; but it may well seem strange that Joseph, who never durst openly profess as regards to Jesus while living, should now (when He hath suffered all the ignominy of a malefactor, and His enemies thought they had effectually rid their hands of Him) not pick to interest himself for the honourable interment of a dead Master. That he should expose himself to the insults and contempt of his brethren for a Teacher, in

all appearance lost and gone; who had not the hardi-
ness to acknowledge Him; while the power of His in-
structions and miracles spoke Him more than man;
and had gained Him general admiration. And yet
(to see the efficacy of those impressions which God
makes upon our minds, even at the most unlikely
seasons of prevailing) this man, who durst not join
with multitudes before in paying Jesus the least re-
spect, ventures now to stand single; goes in boldly to
Pilate, as St. Mark expresses it, and does the office
usual for dearest friends and relations. He begs the
body, that he might vindicate it from the contemptu-
ous usage of common malefactors, and thus declares
that he thought Him a person so different from what
He had been represented, and put to death for, as
even to be worthy the highest honours His condition
was capable of, and received with all the affection
and respect due to his own kindred and family. For
all this is intended by laying Him in *his own new
tomb*, and by those other circumstances contained in
the action itself.

2. St. John adds that Nicodemus likewise contri-
buted to this funeral, by bringing a great quantity of
spices and ointments, and so embalming the body, as
the custom of that country was, to preserve it from
corruption. All which seems to imply that the say-
ing of Jesus, so often repeated, of His rising again
the third day, had made but slender impression upon
them; as indeed we shall find hereafter it did upon
the apostles themselves. God in His wisdom suffered
them to be unmindful of, or very little affected with
a persuasion, which would have rendered all this care

unnecessary; that these circumstances, if taken into consideration, might make way for more satisfactory and unquestionable proofs of His Son's resurrection.

I proceed now to my second head, where it will be necessary to observe these few following particulars:—

1. *First*, The preparation of the body for burial:—

2. *Secondly*, The interment itself:—

3. *Thirdly*, The description of the place where He was laid:—

First, Here is the preparation of the body for burial, expressed by wrapping it in a linen cloth. By this, no doubt, we are to understand all the wrapping cloths used among the Jews, as Josephus has particularly described by St. John in the *fourth chapter*, where he mentions Lazarus coming out of the grave bound hand and feet, and his face bound about with a napkin. And in this *twelfth chapter*, where he tells us that Peter, after his vision's revelation, went into the empty sepulchre and saw the linen clothes lie in their due order, and the napkin that was about Jesus' head, not lying with the rest of the cloths, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

2. Secondly, The next thing observable is the interment itself, described by Joseph's laying the body thus wound and embalmed in his own tomb. The Jews appear by many passages in the Old Testament to have been, in all ages, extremely jealous concerning the place of their burial, and would have esteemed it a curse not to sleep with their fathers, (as we often find it phrased), that is, not to lie among those of their own race and family. Hence, such as

were sweetly among these purchased parcels of ground; that they might have a property distinct from other people, and suffer none but those of their own house to partake in them. The care of Abraham in buying a field for this purpose from the children of *Heth*, seems to have proceeded from a desire that the bodies of those who worshipped the One true God might not be mingled with idolaters. And possibly the field mentioned in this chapter to be bought for burying strangers in, might be intended to hinder foreigners, or those who were not entirely within the covenant from having, even in death, any fellowship with those who looked upon themselves as holy and the peculiar people of God. But the appropriating sepulchres to particular persons and families was in use long before our Saviour's time, and this was done by purchasing some pieces of ground near the respective cities (for within the cities none might be buried) and there making a convenient repository for themselves and those that belonged to them. Such was this of Joseph in a garden, not far from the place where our Lord was crucified. And as a mark of his great veneration, here he deposited the body of Jesus, where he designed to lay his own, and theirs whose nature and affection had made dearest, and of most honourable regard to him.

Having reasoned thus far, I ought not to proceed before putting you in mind, how incontestable a proof these things are, that our Lord's body was actually dead. *Rilate* states no objections in the matter, that he knows among those of his own family. *Man. xxi. 7*

would not grant Joseph's request till the centurion, who commanded the guard ordered to attend the execution, had first satisfied him that Jesus had been some time dead. Joseph was His disciple, and His friend; and would not have treated the body of one whom he honoured and loved in such a manner as must needs have destroyed all remains of life, had there been any in it. And I know not what proof of this matter can be possibly desired more, than that a man's enemies have the killing, and his friends have the burying of him. The one will be sure not to leave or deliver him up, before he be dead; and the other will be as careful not to bury him, till after he is so.

3. I come now to the *third* branch of my *second* head; which consists in a description of the tomb wherein our Lord's body was laid: every circumstance whereof is of weight. And as the former particulars abundantly evince the reality of His death, so this is a strong confirmation to the truth of His resurrection.

1. Now the evangelist takes notice first of all; that this was a *new tomb*; and St. Luke expresses the same thing by calling it a *tomb, wherein never man before was laid*. The dead among the Jews were unclean; and whosoever touched a carcase did thereby contract a legal pollution. It was not therefore fit for Him, Who died not as other men do, for the punishment of their own sins; for Him, upon Whom not any blemish of the levitical dispensation could ever take hold; for Him, Who came to render the ceremonial ordinances useless, after a full performance of them; but

especially for Him, to Whose human nature the Divine was inseparably united, to lay that body, with which God was essentially present, even in the grave, among the putrified remains of common sinners. But, besides the indignity which this would have been to that flesh, ordained to see no *corruption*, this is also a considerable circumstance for the proof of His rising again^d. We read in the *Old Testament*, of a man restored to life by being cast into Elisha's grave; which was a miracle owing to the efficacy of that great prophet's bones^e. Had therefore our Lord been laid where any other person had lain before, His enemies might have suspected that some of those others had risen from the dead; or at least, that He had risen by a virtue derived from some of them. But now, being the first, and the only person interred in this tomb, when His body left this sepulchre empty, no suspicion could remain of its being any other body than that which Joseph had taken down from the cross, and disposed of in that place; or of His being restored to life again by any virtue and power but His own.

2. A second remark upon this occasion is, that His tomb was hewn out of a rock. This is agreeable to the fashion of that country, where they chose to make their sepulchres as durable as might be. In order hereunto they cut them in solid stone, and made as many niches of the proportion of a human body, as they designed persons to be deposited in them. And

^d Heb. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 27, 31.
^e 2 Kings xiii. 21.

this sheweth another objection, I industriously put about by the Jews, *that His disciples stole the body away*, and then imposed upon the world with a confident but false report of their Master's being raised from the dead: for such a sepulchre as this was not capable of being undermined, or having any conveyance made for removing the body, as loose earth might have been. There could be no possible way for the person deposited in a place so contrived to get out again, except only at the mouth or door of the cave, by which he was at first laid into it. And this was rendered as impracticable as the former by that which the evangelist hath told us in the next words, which is, *That Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.* This stone, St. Mark observeth, was very great; so great, that the women who came in the morning of our Lord's resurrection with a pious intent to do their last honours to Him were in pain to think what assistance they should find sufficient for rolling it away, and so getting a free access to the body. All which further confutes that fond opinion of His disciples' stealing Him away. But yet much more so still does that vain caution used by the pharisees, in the latter end of this chapter, who, to make all as they imagined sure, obtained of Pilate to have the stone sealed, and the sepulchre watched by a strong guard of soldiers. This sentry would not suffer the body to be conveyed out by this way, nor would the nature of the place allow it by any other. Our Lord Himself, had He not been more than man, could not have forced a passage out. And we are told an-

accordingly that his Divine power burst all these bars
 asunder; an earthquake and an angel rolled away the
 stones; and that by an operation so amazing that the
 keepers could not withstand, could not sustain it; for
they became all as dead men, trembling for fear, and
running affrighted into the city, to tell what was done.
 Thus you see, of what mighty significance it is to
 us, that such a perpetual description is given to the
 world of our blessed Lord's burial, and all the cir-
 cumstances relating to it. The persons concerned,
 the manner of treating His body, the place where it
 was laid, all contribute great strength to those two
 most important articles of the Christian faith, the
 death, and resurrection of Jesus. I proceed now, in
 the last place, to lay before you some reflections from
 this subject; and what hath been said upon it.

1st *First*, We may learn from hence, why the
 Christian church hath been so careful to insert into
 her creeds, and solemn confessions of faith, this bu-
 rial of Christ, as well as His crucifixion, death, and
 resurrection; because this hath so close a connexion
 with those other fundamental doctrines, that we must
 have wanted a great and very substantial part of the
 evidence, both of His being dead, and of His rising
 again, had we not unquestionable assurances of His
 being buried.

2^d *Secondly*, Here we have an example of that
 common humanity of burying the dead. This is
 almost all countries have according to their respective
 customs been careful of, as a respect due to that
 swelling of flesh, once honoured with so noble an in-
 habitant as a rational soul. And mankind seem to

have been all along very tender, and much concerned for it. This appears not only from the practice of the thing to the generality of people; but by making it a punishment, and mark of infamy and the last detestation, to deny this privilege to such malefactors as have forfeited all right to the respects which others challenge from us: particularly, among Christians the custom of burning the dead, and preserving their ashes hath been disused; and the bodies of their deceased are laid up entire in the grave with such solemnities, and in such a manner as might intimate their belief of a future resurrection. And though the vain expence of pompous funerals be one of those extravagances which proceed from pride and luxury; yet the pattern here before us will bear us out in all the expressions of a decent respect, for the memory of those whom God takes away from us. We are not to be condemned for every sort of cost upon these occasions, as may be plainly gathered from that remarkable passage of our Lord's commending highly the piety of that woman, who spent three hundred pennyworth of spikenard, very precious, to anoint His body to the burial. He would not have promised that this action should be spread, far and wide as the gospel itself, in her praise; He would not have suffered such honourable mention to be made of Joseph, and Nicodemus, and the women who brought spices and ointments to His sepulchre, if these had been blameable expences; and what this Pattern of humility and meekness allowed, it would be too delicate a niceness in us to condemn.

If the regard due to a human soul rendered some

respect to the dead a principle, which manifested itself to the common sense of all nations; shall we think that less care is due to the bodies of Christians, which once entertained a more glorious inhabitant, and were living temples of the Holy Ghost?—those bodies, which were consecrated to the service of God; which bore their part in the duties of religion, fought the good fight of faith and patience, self-denial and mortification, and underwent the fatigue of many hardships and afflictions for the sake of piety and virtue?—those bodies, which we own to be still under the care of a Divine Providence (and surely what God disdains not to take into His protection, we ought not to look upon as outcast and common dung, or despise as unworthy our regard)—those bodies, which we believe shall one day be *fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*; awakened again from their sleep of death, have all their scattered particles of dust summoned together into due order, and be made partakers of the same glory with their immortal souls, as once they were of the same sufferings and good works?—those bodies, which are members of Christ, and are already in Him their representative exalted to the throne of God on high? These considerations prevailed with the primitive Christians to bury their dead with much solemnity, and particular testimonies of grave and decent respect. They committed them to the ground with prayers for their restitution, with praises of the virtues they had been useful in the exercise of while living, and with ample recom-

*that through the grave and gate of death, we may pass
to our joyful resurrection, for His merits, Who died
and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SUPPLEMENT.

EASTER DAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, Who, through Thine Only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee, that as by Thy special grace preventing us Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end^b. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE.

COL. III. 1.

Paraphrase.

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,	1, 2 If then, by the pro- fession of faith made in your baptism, and a newness of life
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^b 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14, 15. Rev. i. 18. xx. 6, 14. xxi. 4. John v. 24. xi. 26. Heb. x. 19. Rom. viii. 11.

COL. III. 1.

Paraphrase.

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

agreeable thereto, ye are conformed to Christ's resurrection; consider where He is, and let your desires and cares be there also; even up in heaven, and the glories of that blessed place.

3, 4 The spiritual life ye now lead, ye live by Him; the immortal one ye hope to lead, ye owe to Him all your title to: and though the excellence of this does not yet appear, because He, Who now lives it in our human nature, is absent and unseen: yet, when He comes again, the glories of it shall be manifested in the person not of Him only, but of every good Christian.

5, 6, 7 In the meanwhile be careful to subdue those lusts, which have no farther ends than earthly pleasures, and which, (with respect to sin in general, sometimes called the body of sin) may be styled members of that body: for these are great provocations to God, and were renounced by you at your conversion to Christianity.

THE GOSPEL.

ST. JOHN XX.

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

ed. (comp. Luke xxiii. 56, Matt. xxviii. 1.) as soon as the morning began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, Joanna, and some other devout women that had followed Jesus from Galilee, (compare Luke viii. 3. xxiv. 10. Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1.) having before observed the sepulchre, and the position of the body, (Luke xxiii. 55) came with intention to anoint it. In their passage they had represented to themselves the difficulty of removing the stone, which had been rolled to shut up the cave, and sealed with Pilate's own signet. (Matt. xxvii. 60, 66. Mark xvi. 3.) But, arriving at the place, they found the stone removed to their hands, and the access open to the cave; and in the grave itself, two angels sitting,

Paraphrase.

1 The sabbath being now over, in reverence to which the women, who had prepared spices and ointments to embalm our Lord's body, had forbore attempting to do it hitherto; (compare Luke xxiii. 56, Matt. xxviii. 1.) as soon as the morning began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, Joanna, and some other devout women that had followed Jesus from Galilee, (compare Luke viii. 3. xxiv. 10. Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1.) having before observed the sepulchre, and the position of the body, (Luke xxiii. 55) came with intention to anoint it. In their passage they had represented to themselves the difficulty of removing the stone, which had been rolled to shut up the cave, and sealed with Pilate's own signet. (Matt. xxvii. 60, 66. Mark xvi. 3.) But, arriving at the place, they found the stone removed to their hands, and the access open to the cave; and in the grave itself, two angels sitting,

ST. JOHN XX.

Paraphrase.

by whom they were told that Jesus was not there, but was risen; as He had before declared He would do. (Matt. xxviii. 2, 8. Mark xvi. 5, 8. Luke xxiv. 2, 9.)

2 Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.

2 With this account much astonished, and affrighted at the vision of angels, they hasten back to the place where the eleven apostles, and some other believers were assembled. (Mark xvi. 8. Matt. xxviii. 8. Luke xxiv. 10.) And having made no mention of what they had seen or heard to any person till they came thither, Mary Magdalene accompanied with and in the name of the other women, acquainted them with all that had passed, addressing herself more particularly to Peter and John.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the

ST. JOHN XX.

Paraphrase.

linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

6, 7 The grave-clothes here mentioned, and the manner of their being wrapped about the body, will be better understood, if we consult the description of Lazarus, when raised by our Lord. (Chap. xi. 44.)

8, 9 St. John now believed the whole account given him by Mary of the earthquake, the angels, &c. Or, upon this evidence, he believed our Lord to be risen; though not upon the evidence of the prophecies concerning Him; which as yet were not sufficiently understood by the apostles.

COMMENT.

How different is this solemnity, from those which lately called us to the house of God! How happy the change from lamentation, and mourning, and woe, the tragedy of a bleeding and a dying Saviour,

to joy and gladness, and the triumphs of a living and victorious One! *For this is the day which the Lord hath made*¹. He hath made it high and holy above the rest, by rising from the dead; by being born a second time; born from the womb of the earth; born now, not so as to prove Himself man, but God. This is that most mysterious day which opened the gates of hell, and brought a release to the prisoners of the grave; which turned our Saviour's cross into a lasting trophy, and brought honour to that once accursed tree; which changed His crown of thorns into a ray of glory; and by a wonderful effect produced immortality out of death, and everlasting renown out of shame and contempt. This is that day, peculiar to Christians, which distinguishes us from all the world besides. The day of our Lord's nativity Jews and gentiles will confess; the day of His passion all the adversaries of our religion boasted of, supposing they had foiled and vanquished this Champion of souls; but this day of His resurrection none but we can celebrate, because none but we acknowledge that He came off with conquest, and defeated all that malice which endeavoured His utter destruction. Let us therefore be glad and rejoice in this Christian jubilee; for our last and most formidable enemy is now destroyed. All his attempts upon the Captain of our salvation were weak and vain; and all the force of hell cannot now prevail against them that fight under His standard. For this is our security, this our rejoicing, that the *Lord is risen, yea the Lord is risen*.

¹ Psal. cxviii. 24.

indeed. *The Lamb, Who was slain, who lieth again, and behold He is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of death and hell.* So essential, so distinguishing a mark of a Christian, and so just a joy is that which the apostles first, and after them the churches of God this day put on. This was the only thing that could put an end to the sorrows and doubts, and confounding fears, the terrors and sad misgivings of the disciples. They had indeed some intimations given them by our Lord in His lifetime, that the third day should restore Him. But the thing itself—the rising from the dead—was so exceeding strange, so wholly new, that it made little impression upon their minds. Or if it had, grief and disorder had quite rased the impression from them, and all those thoughts expired with their Master upon the cross. Affliction seems to have had the same effect upon the apostles, which it generally hath upon melancholy and dejected spirits; the possessing them with strong prejudices and distrusts, and not suffering them to see so much as the possibility of an event most desirable to them. The first hint they had was from Mary Magdalene and other zealous women, who, as soon as the sabbath was over, went early with a preparation of spices and ointments to pay their last respects of embalming our Lord's body. These return with the surprising account of the stone being rolled away from the door of the cave, and the sepulchre found open. Upon this message Peter and John resolve to satisfy themselves, and eagerly make toward the place. John contents

himself with stooping down and looking in, but Peter, something more curious, goes into the very place where the body had lain. There he sees the *linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself*. This astonishing sight invites the other disciple to take a closer view too; and accordingly he *also went in, and saw, and believed*. But there is reason enough to suspect, that all he believed as yet was no more than what Mary had told them, *that the Lord was taken away out of the sepulchre, and she knew not where they had laid Him*¹: for that all these circumstances convinced them that He was alive again, and had removed Himself, seems not very likely from what follows; that *as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead*^m—that is, they had not considered, or did not understand the necessity of the *Messiah's* resurrection: and so never recollected, that either their Master must have been false in all His pretensions of that kind, or He must have revived again and left the grave, according to the time and manner they saw it now done in.

Now the proofs of our Blessed Lord's resurrection are *twofold*, and consist—1. partly of matter of fact—and 2. partly of the agreement of that fact with ancient prophecies (in *predictions* and *types*) relating to that very important fact. And here it becomes us with devout gratitude to remark, that as no truth is of more importance to the Christian religion, so none had greater care taken to strengthen the belief of it.

Amongst so great a variety of proofs as belong to

¹ John xx. 2.

^m Ibid. 9.

the FIRST part of this subject ;—such as the testimony of angels, of disciples, of women, of numbers of people, the conversation of forty days, the testimony of the elements themselves, the earth trembling and quaking as if in pangs and travail to discharge this new birth, the testimony of those whose bodies appeared in the holy city ; nay, the testimony of the most inveterate enemies of Christ^a : for even the Jews themselves, by advancing so incredible a story as that of His disciples' stealing Him away, do in effect confess and corroborate a truth, which they so very weakly endeavour to destroy—amongst this great variety I shall confine myself to those within the compass of this Gospel. And here what I shall observe to you will come under these two heads : *first*, The circumstances in which these disciples found the sepulchre : *secondly*, Their great slowness in apprehending and believing our Lord's resurrection : both which things contributed very much to the proof of this article of our faith, that Christ did really rise again from the dead.

First, The circumstances in which the disciples found the sepulchre were a very considerable proof of the reality of Christ's resurrection, and the strongest confutation imaginable of that frivolous pretence, put about by the chief priests, of the disciples' stealing Him away. Their unnecessary caution was most happily made an occasion of rendering that unquestionable, which they designed especially to prevent—the opinion of Christ's rising the third day. For, (as we yesterday were told) to this end they procure a

^a Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

guard of the governor to watch the cave, and contrive that the stone, rolled to close up the door of it, should be sealed with his own signet*. But when they found all this impertinent care of theirs had no effect, and the soldiers ran away frightened with the earthquake and vision of angels, and related what had happened, then they bribed them with large gifts, and promises of security and pardon to spread abroad a report, that His disciples had surprized the grave, while the keepers were asleep; and that, having privately conveyed away the body, they gave out, that He had made His words good, in rising again the third day. A most unhappy pretence; and such an one, as seems to carry a present infatuation of mind along with it. For who, that thinks at all, would suffer himself to be deceived by a lie, that plainly discovers its own falsehood; and is so far from being true, that it is not possible it should be so? For, as St. Augustine, in a just indignation, expostulates the case with the soldiers; *Ye wicked, corrupt, senseless wretches; either ye were awake or asleep; if awake, it was your business to secure the body from being stolen away; if asleep, then your own words disprove you: for, granting this, it was impossible you should either know what was done, or who the persons were that did it.* So the contriver is even the father of lies himself, as sometimes to detect himself; and to serve no other end, but only branding the believers with the scandal of easiness or perverseness of temper, and covering the relator with shame. And sure the truth never shines

* Matt. xvii. 66.

† Ibid. xxviii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

so bright, as when the oppositions that strive to darken it are plainly seen through, and under an evident necessity of being false.

That Romans, whose military discipline was so exceedingly strict, should neglect their post upon so extraordinary an emergency, and when such particular zeal and diligence had been used, is as extravagant an imagination as a man could ever think of, except that other of His disciples' stealing Him away. For are not these the very men, who upon the first assault in the garden all forsook Him and fled? They durst not stand by Him even then, when He declared it in His power to call for *twelve legions of angels*, to His rescue; and have they now the confidence to come in a body, and bear away His corpse? They had but *two swords* among them all before; and he who had them the courage to use one of them, durst not afterwards so much as own any knowledge of, or dependence on His Master; and is the case now changed so monstrously, that these poor, naked, dispirited creatures should attempt a detachment of armed men, whose order and business it was to exact, and be provided for them? Is this a likely thing, that they, who durst not so much as appear in public, but assembled themselves privately, and shut up their doors for fear of the Jews, should invade a strong guard? that they should all on a sudden grow valiant, or rather indeed fool-hardy to this degree, when He, in Whom they trusted, was dead? when the stoutest of them all, even

1 Matt. xxvi. 53.

2 Luke xvii. 38.

while He was yet alive, trembled at the voice of a silly servant, and did the most cowardly action in the world, that of affirming, nay swearing to a falsehood, to deliver himself from the danger of an inquisitive and busy tongue? These are difficulties never to be got over; and such as will not suffer any man that considers them to believe that idle pretence, which the Jews so industriously reported to disprove our Saviour's resurrection.

But let us for once suppose, what yet is most improbable, that the disciples had courage enough for so desperate an undertaking. Yet robberies, we know, are committed in haste and hurry; and every moment is tedious to men under confusion and fear of discovery. If, therefore, the removing of the body had been their work, and they had snatched an opportunity for it while the sentinels slept; would they not have taken it away, as it was, without staying to unbind and undress it? Do thieves, after they have rifled a house, use to spend time in putting things in order again? And is it not agreeable to all the reason in the world, that these persons would have been rather solicitous to make their escape, than to strip the corpse, to fold up the clothes, and to lay them apart from one another in their proper places? That which renders this still more and more inconceivable, is the custom of interment in that country: which therefore St. John does not forget to mention particularly; as being in truth a fit preparation, and proper strengthening to the account he gives here. For he acquaints us*, that *Nicodemus brought a mixture of*

* John xix. 39, 40.

myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight ; and they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now these spices were used to preserve the body from corruption ; which they did by being a sort of shell, or crust over it : and this their glutinous substance qualified them for. But the same gluey nature must needs make the clothes they were used with, cling very close and fast to the skin, and not to be drawn off without a great deal of time and difficulty. When, therefore, these coverings were found regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by ; this plainly shews the removing of Jesus' body to be a work of leisure, and much deliberation ; such as by no means agrees with the confusion and haste of things done by stealth. Nor can it enter into any sober man's thoughts, that they, who came privily and in danger of their lives, should so far venture the awaking of the guard, and trifle away their time in these so arduous, so unnecessary niceties. So that ; had the Lord been taken away, we cannot but think they would have taken Him as He was, which would have served their turn very well. But since the sepulchre was found empty, and the grave-clothes left behind, we have great reason to conclude that He took Himself away. And it was by the same Divine power, which brought Him into the world by the Blessed Virgin, that He raised His own dead body to life a second time, without breaking the seal, or removing the stone. For this, we are expressly told, was not His, but the angels' doing¹. And done it

¹ Matt. xxviii. 2.

was, not to make Him a passage, but to make the access to the tomb easy, and give opportunity for discovering this wonderful work of God. These objections, I say, lie both against the Jews' fiction; that the disciples had stolen their Lord; and Mary's fear that some other had conveyed Him away. And if Peter and John had attended to what they saw, their own eyes, and their own reason might have convinced them, that this was Jesus' own doing, how marvellous soever it might seem to them at that time. But, even in this too, there was a particular Providence. For their very slowness in apprehending and believing the resurrection of Christ, did itself contribute much to the persuading men, and proving the reality of it: which was the *second* thing I proposed to shew.

And I now proceed to prove it accordingly upon these *two* accounts: in the first place, that backwardness of believing in the disciples added to the evidences given of this resurrection, and ministered occasion for several most undeniable proofs, which otherwise had not been necessary to them. Indeed their backwardness was so great, that one would wonder how they should be so exceedingly stupid and heavy; had not God in His wisdom so ordered the matter, that their incredulity should be our confirmation. The certainty of a resurrection in general our Lord had oftentimes foretold; and that *all who were in the grave should one day hear His voice, and come forth*^a. The necessity of His own resurrection, and the stated time of it, He had expressly declared. And when He gave them warning at any time of His approaching

^a John v. 29.

death, He never failed to support them, withal, by an assurance, that He would rise again the third day. Notwithstanding all which warnings, the women who returned from the sepulchre, and related their vision of angels, though persons of known integrity, were yet but indifferently received. Their words, says St. Luke, *seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*¹ The greatest use that was made of it, seems to be the putting Peter and John here upon examining matters more strictly. And yet even they do not appear to have made all those conclusions, from the posture they found things in, which we have shewn are fairly and naturally to be gathered from it. After this, He appeared in person to Mary Magdalene, as the following part of this chapter acquaints us. But with what success, as to the disciples, St. Mark tells us, *for she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept: but they, when they heard that He was alive and had been seen of her, believed her not.*² The same day two of them went to a village in the country, and He appeared to them, walked with them, discoursed with them largely, expounded the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself; and still their eyes and their understandings were blinded, *that they could not see Him.* But, by breaking of bread the discovery was made at last, and great haste was used to carry back these joyful tidings to the rest of their company. Yet when *they went, and told it to the residue, neither believed they them,* says St. Mark.³

¹ Luke xxi. 11. ² Mark xvi. 10, 11.

³ Mark xvi. 13.

After this Jesus resolved to give them ocular demonstration, and shewing Himself to the eleven, upbraided them with their unbelief, that they gave no credit to others who had seen Him before. But now they were so far from trusting others, that they durst not trust even their own eyes. *They were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they had seen a spirit*^a. To deliver them from this fear He commands them to handle Him; and to convince themselves, that He had flesh and bones, and was no airy substance, or empty apparition. Still they were more amazed than convinced. And therefore, to remove all scruple, *while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He called for meat, and took it, and did eat before them*^b. This, one would think, should give satisfaction to the most sceptical doubters. But Thomas, who happened not to be there at that time, would not be content even so. He required a farther confirmation yet, which was, the marks and wounds made by His crucifixion. And to this likewise Jesus condescends. For at another visit to the disciples, He caused *Thomas to thrust his hand into His side, which the spear had pierced, and his fingers into the print of the nails*^c, that had fastened Him to the cross; and so gained the acknowledgment of this so very cautious person too. Again, to make all complete that could be any way necessary, He likewise appeared another time at the sea-side; and there made Himself known to them, by commanding a wonderful draught of fishes. Thus

^a Luke xxiv. 37.^b Ibid. 41, 42, 43.^c John xx. 24, 27.

His divine wisdom saw it expedient (as expressed in one of our Collects) to suffer them to doubt for the more confirmation of the faith^d. And He managed those doubts so, that no circumstance should be wanting at last to prove His resurrection. And though He let them into those proofs by degrees, as they were fit for them, and able to bear them; yet He did it so artificially and prudently too, that every fresh instance confirmed, and added something to those that went before. The empty sepulchre confirmed the report of the women; Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene shewed He was alive; that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that it was at least the Spirit of Christ, by expounding the prophecies, and breaking of bread; that to the eleven shewed the reality of His body; the conviction given Thomas proved it the self-same body that had been crucified; and that miracle of the fishes argued the same divine nature still united to the same body.

So that though here be many evidences, yet none of them are superfluous. Every one hath something new, and peculiarly its own; and all together are a demonstration so full and satisfactory of the same Christ, the same God and Man in One Person, returned from the dead, that we have great reason to praise God, for suffering the disciples to doubt so much, and so long; since by their *not believing, but because they had seen*, there is the greater security given to us, *who have not seen, and yet have believed*^e.

^d John xxi.^e John xx. 29.

For, in the second place, this contributed likewise to the satisfying others in the truth of our Lord's resurrection, as it took away all those prejudices, that might arise, and usually do arise, upon the first reporters taking up things too hastily. These disciples were to be, as they stile themselves, the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection^f. And therefore it was of great concern to the world, upon what convictions they embraced a truth, which others, who could not be eye witnesses of it, were to rest upon their testimony for. The apostles, we know, were plain men, and constant followers of our Lord: so that both their ability, and their honesty might be called in question, upon this occasion. The simplicity of their life and conversation, though it might free them from the suspicion of deceiving others, yet could not give any assurance, that they were not deceived themselves. And we know that men are often exceedingly positive in things that afterwards prove to be false, and which might have been detected sooner, if they had had either the judgment, or the patience to examine them strictly. Especially, too, if there be any interest concerned in the case, how great a step towards the believing a thing true, is the wishing that it were so? And what case could lie more open to the suspicion than that now before us? Upon Christ's rising, or not rising from the dead would depend the authority of His doctrine, and all His miracles. Himself had referred the whole issue to this last, this important sign; that as *Jonas was three days and three nights in*

^f Acts i. 8. x. 41, 42.

the whale's belly, so the Son of Man should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth; So that all His reputation, and all theirs too, depended upon it. And therefore both the love of their Master, and a tenderness for themselves might reasonably be thought to bias them in this particular, and to make the passage for such an opinion much more easy and open to their minds. But now, when instead of all this, they seemed rather stupid and insensible; inso-much that our Saviour reproaches them with folly and slowness of understanding, nay with infidelity and hardness of heart^b; when they were so far from inclining to the belief of it, as to be rather obstinately bent against it, and stood out against all the impressions of this kind, with a sort of resolute perverseness; when they would neither credit one another, nor their own selves; but cavilled at every fresh instance, and raised new scruples, and new difficulties perpetually; and yet, when afterwards these very men were so firmly persuaded of this, that they staked down their lives in vindication of it; these must needs be considerations of mighty weight to establish their credit. For these free them from all imputation of easiness and partiality. And we cannot in reason have any thing to say against such witnesses; nor attribute their confidence at last to any other cause, than to the powerful evidence of truth upon their own consciences. They proceeded so warily, and so far renounced their own interest, as to doubt every circumstance, and resolve not to believe, till there was

^a Matt. xii. 40. xvi. 4.^b Luke xxiv. 25.

no pretence left for doubting any longer. They received nothing, till it had been most critically inquired into. And they stood out against those reports of credible men, and of their own senses, to which, if any consideration of interest could have swayed them, they would have reconciled themselves the very first moment. And more than this we cannot have; more we cannot ask in any witness, than judgment, and care, and integrity: and all these attested too by the seal of the Holy Ghost, the gift of miracles from heaven. So that, upon all accounts, the delays and doubtings of the apostles were of mighty advantage to this doctrine of the resurrection. They gave occasion for more convincing and sensible proofs of it to themselves; and they rendered them more competent and credible attestors of it to others.

Under the SECOND branch of this subject—viz. the agreement of the fact with the ancient prophecies—we shall do well to observe that when by several demonstrations of His being really alive, our Lord had rendered His disciples fit to hear reason, He put them in mind, that the events which they looked upon as altogether incredible, were no other than He, in His former conversation with them, had very frequently assured them should be brought to pass:—that they were in every point agreeable to the prophecies delivered many ages before;—those prophecies which the Jews unanimously allowed to be intended of the Messias; and which, since now they had seen them exactly accomplished in Him, were an irrefragable argument that He was that very Messias. Upon this He enlarges; and by the explanation of

those Scriptures which related to Himself, as well as by the inward assistances, and illuminations of His grace, He darted new light into their understandings, and shewed them the correspondence and exact harmony of those predictions with things, which, they could witness, had happened to Him. The stress hereof lies in those passages, in which, from the mention of these former prophecies, He draws this inference, *Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into His glory?* and again, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day*¹.

Those clauses, *thus it is written, and thus it behoved*, may probably mean no more than this; that Christ must needs suffer and rise again, because the Scriptures concerning Him could not otherwise have been true. And then the argument is but one, that after God had declared such things concerning the Messiah, and made these the marks which the world was to distinguish Him by; however strange and surprising they might appear at first, yet upon maturer consideration, it was easy for men to satisfy themselves that they were unavoidably necessary for vindicating the truth of God, Who had so long before given warning of them by the prophets.

But in truth, this necessity was subordinate to another. For these things were therefore foretold, because God had from all eternity determined them: and they were determined, because His infinite wisdom saw the fitness of them, and their subserviency

¹ Luke xxiv. 21, 26, 44, 45, 46.

to the great ends of sending the Messiah for the redemption of mankind. Therefore that expression, *thus it behoved*, if it do not require, yet it may admit of another sense, which makes it an argument somewhat different from the former; and that is, that the death and resurrection of Jesus were in all points suitable to the character of the Messiah; and that the scheme and design of man's redemption could not have been so properly satisfied by any other means as by these.

This, I say, if it be not the most natural and necessary, is yet a very useful construction of that expression. But I shall not take the liberty of treating of it in this latitude. And therefore limiting myself to the former sense, what I have to say upon this subject will consist only of two heads.

I. *First*, I shall instance in some of the most material passages, which it is reasonable for us to suppose our Lord insisted upon; and

II. *Secondly*, I shall show wherein the force of His argument lay, in applying these as remedies to the perplexities and doubts of His disciples at that time.

I. *First*, I shall instance in some of the most material passages, which it is reasonable to suppose our Lord made use of in the present case. He is said to have begun with *Moses and all the prophets*; and to have expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself^k. Now, though it is possible He might open to them the predictions relating to other matters and actions of His life; yet the main difficulties then lying

^k Luke xiv. 27.

before them; and the only things mentioned here being His *passion* and *resurrection*, I shall confine my discourse to such as foretel these only. Nor shall I enlarge any farther upon them than to produce such, at least the principal of such as we find expressly applied to this purpose in the *New Testament*. For since the evangelist hath not told us, particularly, what prophecies our Lord insisted upon to convince them at this time, I cannot think it unreasonable to presume, that the disciples endeavoured to convince others by the same Scriptures, to which they owed their own conviction. And therefore such as we find ~~them~~ either relating, as quoted by our Lord before His death; or else urging upon the Jews in their own persons afterwards; such, I think, we may fairly presume, had a place in our Lord's discourse, which was designed to settle their minds, and remove their doubts, and compose their astonishment occasioned by His death and resurrection.

I only add, before I enter upon particulars, that there are *two* sorts of things, by which future events were signified under the Old Testament. The one consisted in *words*; the other in *facts*: and these are therefore distinguished by *predictions* and *types*. For what the prophets *did* was in some cases reputed of equal significance and authority with what they *spoke*; both being allowed to proceed from the impulse and direction of the same Divine Spirit; and upon that account to be as full of mystery, and to challenge the same regard. Accordingly we shall find *both* appealed to with respect to the matter now before us. In handling which I shall consider each apart; and

shew, what intimation was given by both, that Christ must suffer; and that He must rise again from the dead the third day.

As to the sufferings and death of Christ, the prophecies produced in Scripture are very many, and so copious and express as to reach every material circumstance relating to them. That He should be betrayed by a particular friend, one that was sustained by His bounty, and retained to Him, David hath foretold in the 41st Psalm, which Jesus applies to Himself. *I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me, hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He*¹. And again, to the disciples' question, who it was that should betray Him, He answered and said, *He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man, by whom the Son of man is betrayed*^m.

St. Peter in the first of the Acts is express, that some of those imprecations in the 69th and 109th Psalms had Judas' transgressions, and the falling from his apostleship, in viewⁿ. To this likewise our Saviour is very probably thought to allude, when He says, *Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled*^o. The potter's field being bought with the thirty pieces of silver, and His being

¹ John xiii. 18, 19.

ⁿ Acts i. 16, 21.

^m Matt. xxvi. 23, 24.

^o John xvii. 12.

sold for so vile a price, are by St. Matthew referred to an old prophecy—*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken; They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, Whom they of the children of Israel did value*^p;—(or as it is in the Old Testament, a goodly price that I was prized at of them^q)—and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me^r.

The fears and confusion of His disciples are, by our Lord Himself, declared to be an accomplishment of another passage in the same prophet^r—*Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of Me this night, for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad*^s.

The infamous manner of His death, and the profligate companions of His sufferings, St. Mark observes to fall in exactly with the description given by Isaiah many ages before. *With Him they crucified two thieves, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left: and the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors*^t.

David describing the barbarity of his own enemies says, *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture*^u. But St. John informs us, that those words had a much more distant prospect; and how strangely the avarice of the soldiers, and the particular form of Jesus' clothes did concur to give them their due and ultimate completion^x, *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus,*

^p Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

^q Zech. xi. 13.

^r Matt. xxvi. 31.

^s Zech. xiii. 7.

^t Compare Luke xxii. 37.

^u Psal. xxii. 18.

^x John xix. 23, 24.

took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also His coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, let us not rend it; but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Our Lord, in His dying agonies, made use of the very words of David in the 22d Psalm, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* In which Psalm that tragical scene is painted to the life, and the very taunts of His reviling enemies are repeated; as if it were a melancholy poem describing a death already past, rather than a prediction of one to come above a thousand years after: And lastly, just before our Lord expired, He cried, *I thirst*: but this was done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, says St. John, for the same David * complains thus, *They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.* Now this was never strictly and literally true, except in the case of this Son of David; for to Him they ran, and filled a sponge, and gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.

Once more, that impertinent malice of the Roman soldier, who wounded His dead body with a spear, was another circumstance too, corresponding with ancient prophecy in those words quoted by St. John from Zechariah, *They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced* *.

* John xix. 28.

z Psalm lxx. 21.

* John xix. 37. Zech. xii. 10.

The foundation of the eunuch's conversion was laid in a text of Isaiah. And Philip could not begin at any more apposite scripture to bring him over to Jesus, than that which Providence ordered that he should just then be reading. *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before His shearer, so opened He not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away; and who shall declare His generation, for His life is taken from the earth?*^b

Now, as in these last words that prophet foretold the meekness and invincible patience of the blessed Jesus under so injurious a death, so did he likewise the great charity and main design of it, and how a person so innocent, so divine, came to endure so bitter things; that this was a dispensation of God for the benefit of sinful man, to lay on Him the burthen of the punishment of those transgressions, which must otherwise have sunk the guilty committers into irrecoverable misery and destruction. For if we look into the 5th and 6th verses of that famous 53d of Isaiah, we shall find that St. Peter does but take the prophet's words into his own mouth, when he gives this account of Christ^c. *Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were, as sheep going astray. So the apostle. Now observe the prophet, eight hundred years before! Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was*

^b Acts viii. 32, 33.

^c 1 Peter ii. 24.

bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

These, I think, may more than suffice for *verbal predictions* of our Lord's passion. I shall now instance in two or three of the other sort, *figures* and *types*; taken notice of in the New Testament.

The *first* I shall mention is the paschal lamb, appointed to be slain, and the blood of it sprinkled upon the doors of every Israelite, in the night when God slew all the first-born in Egypt. And the use of this was, to secure the inhabitants where this blood was sprinkled from all the dire effects of the destroying angel. Now the like benefit accrues to Christians by the blood of Jesus. St. John calls Him *the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world^a*, and says, *He hath washed us in His own blood.* St. Paul, *that we are reconciled to God by His blood*; and *that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* And St. John once more takes notice, that *when the soldiers came to take down the malefactors from the cross, they brake the legs of the two thieves crucified with Jesus.* But, *when they came to Him, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs.* Which he attributes to a very particular Providence, for *these things were done*, says he; *that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken.* It seems then

^a John i. 29. Rev. i. 5. Rom. v. 10. 1 Cor. v. 7. John xix. 32, 33, 36

that scripture had not been fulfilled, if any bone of Jesus had been broken. But that scripture is one of the precepts concerning the passover, in the twelfth of Exodus, and was constantly observed by the Jews in their celebration of it. Since therefore this scripture required, and found its full and last completion in Christ, some account there must be of the concern He had in it. And this can be no other than the mutual relation between the Jewish lamb and Him—that as the shadow, *Him* as the substance; and, consequently, He is the true, the universal passover, which turns away the wrath of God, and, by the merit of His sacrifice, delivers them that have part in Him from the destruction of the reprobate and wicked.

Another image of Christ was the sin-offering instituted by the Jewish law. This (I have proved already), as upon other occasions, so especially upon the great day of atonement, was to reconcile men to God. And the manner of it was (it hath been said) to bring the blood into the sanctuary, and sprinkle it before the Lord, but to burn the body without the camp. With allusion to this, Christ is not only called our *peace*, and said to be *made sin for us**; but more particularly, the same ceremonies are observed to be nicely regarded in the place and manner of His death. For thus the author to the Hebrews argues, *The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify*

* Eph. ii. 14. 2 Cor. v. 21.

the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate^f.

One more remarkable type there is, denoting both the kind and the efficacy of His death. When the Israelites in the wilderness were stung with fiery serpents, Moses was commanded to set a brazen serpent, resembling those in form, on high upon a pole, and as many as looked upon this were healed of their plague. Our Lord in like manner, though made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet knew no sin Himself: as that brazen serpent had the resemblance only, but none of the fire and venom of those serpents, whose sting it was ordained to cure. Nor did the fixing it in view effect a recovery by any natural and necessary operation, but the benefit of healing was confined to them that fixed their eyes upon it; and consequent to that, *turned themselves to this sign of salvation^g*, as the Wisdom of Solomon expresses it. This action made them capable of the mercy of God, working in and by that emblem. Thus is the death of Christ effectual for curing the sins of men; not of all indifferently, and without distinction, but of such as qualify themselves by faith. All which cannot be more fully illustrated than by that passage in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus^h, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* And that there is a peculiar propriety in that phrase of being lifted up, with regard to the crucifixion of

^f Heb. xiii. 11, 12.

^g Wisd. xvi. 6, 7.

^h John iii. 14, 15.

our blessed Saviour, the same evangelist hath instructed us (chap. xii. 32, 33), who upon the occasion of those words, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me*, adds, by way of explanation to this term, *This said Jesus, signifying what death He should die*. Let this suffice for proof, that thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to *suffer*. That there was the same necessity, and upon the same account, for His *rising again*. I shall now proceed to shew, from a consideration of the predictions and types of our Blessed Lord's resurrection, as well that He *should rise from the dead*, as that He should rise *the third day*.

Almighty God had promised to Abraham, *That in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed; this seed*, St. Paul affirms to the Galatians, *is Christ, Who redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*[†]. And St. Peter acquaints the Jews, that this promise was made good to them in our Lord's resurrection. (Acts iii. 25, 26.) *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*.

David[‡], magnifying the mercy of God in His Son's exaltation to the throne, had said, *I will declare the*

[†] Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

[‡] Psal. ii.

decree, the Lord hath said unto me, *Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee*. And St. Paul, preaching in the synagogue at Antioch, contends for this as the true sense of these words: *We declare unto you glad tidings, says he, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again*^x; as it is also written in the second Psalm, *Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee*. And, that this psalm had a peculiar reference to the Messiah we learn from the allusion made to it, by the whole college of the apostles in the fourth chapter of the same book.

The same royal prophet, in another place, is carried out into raptures of trust and holy hope, which could not, in strict propriety of speech, belong to any but Christ. And therefore of His person we are to understand those words: *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption*^y. The application whereof to the matter now in hand St. Peter vindicates thus, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost: *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and knowing, that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell,*

^x Acts xiii. 32, 33.

^y Psal. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 29, 30, 31.

neither His flesh did see corruption. And St. Paul, in like manner, here to the Jews at Antioch: *David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but He, Whom God raised again, saw no corruption*².

But, in our Saviour's resurrection there was one particular privilege, which distinguished Him from any other person miraculously brought to life again. It is, that they only were called back, and as it were reprieved, for a certain term of time, but still continued subject to mortality; and when that period was expired returned to their dark prisons of the grave, there to remain confined till the general gaol-delivery at the great assizes of the whole world: but Christ, as St. Paul observes, *being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him*^a. And this peculiar exception that apostle observes to have been punctually foretold by Isaiah: *And, as concerning that God raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David*^b.

Now by these *sure mercies of David* are meant those blessings for which Almighty God had engaged His truth, and of the full attainment whereof David so often expresses his entire confidence; particularly that of an everlasting kingdom to be continued to his posterity. Now this having manifestly failed in the first and temporal sense, it follows that the promise must have a second and more sublime sense belonging

² Acts xiii. 36, 37.

^a Rom. vi. 9.

^b Isa. lv. 3. Acts xii. 34.

to it, such as imports a spiritual and eternal kingdom ; the same which Isaiah foresaw in his ninth chapter ; and which the holy angel, at our Saviour's incarnation, declared should be vested in the wonderful Son of that virgin mother : *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David ; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end*^c. This investiture the apostles declare to have commenced from His resurrection : *The God of our fathers*, say they to the Jewish sanhedrim, *hath raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, Him hath God called with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour*. Now from hence it follows, that He could not rise to die a second time, because such death must put a period to His reign ; and consequently, that kingdom not being everlasting, these mercies of David were not sure ; that is, the promise would not be made good in the just extent and most valuable sense of it.

As to the particular time of our Lord's resurrection, though some passages in the prophets are very justly interpreted of it ; yet, because I find no express application of them, by the writers of the *New Testament*, I shall content myself with that one type, produced by Christ Himself to the Jews, which at once prefigured both the thing, and this circumstance of it. And this was so remarkable, that our Lord refers that obstinate people hither, as to the last, and most awakening miracle, which God reserved for their convic-

^c Luke i. 32, 33. Isa. ix. 7. Acts v. 30, 31.

tion, and would hold them inexcusable upon whom it should have no effect. *As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a Greater than Jonas is here*^d.

Thus have I laid before you some of the principal prophecies and types, by which God signified long before that the Messiah should *suffer* and *rise again* from the dead; such as we may probably conjecture our Lord expounded in His conferences with the disciples; because we find them insisted upon afterwards in their reasonings with the Jews. It were very easy to enlarge yet more, by producing others of the same kind with reference to the other parts of our Lord's exaltation, and the administration of His spiritual kingdom: but I confine myself to these two subjects, of His *death* and *resurrection*, as proper to this season. I shall now descend briefly to the *second* branch of my division upon it, which is,

2. To shew wherein the strength of this argument, drawn from such predictions and prefigurations, consists; and upon what account it was proper for bringing over these disciples to a belief of Jesus therefore being the Christ, because He did actually thus suffer, and thus rise again from the dead.

Now in order hereunto we must observe,

1. *First*, That the persons, to whom our Lord di-

^d Matt. xii. 40, 41.

rected this discourse, had been all along bred up in the knowledge and practice of the Jewish religion; and received the writings of the Old Testament as the oracles of God, and the rule and standard of their faith. Now the greater their skill in these things was, the more firm their persuasion would be of the Messias to come—One, who should fulfil all the glorious things spoken of Him there, and was to be known, and distinguished from all false pretenders by doing so: for of the Christ those words of Moses are to be understood, and were constantly understood by the ancient Jews: *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people*°. Since then their obedience to this great prophet was enjoined under so severe a penalty, it must needs be, that God left them not utterly in the dark in this most important affair; but gave them some particular marks and characters, by which they might be able to discern that Prophet, to Whom such obedience was due.

2. *Secondly*, It is likewise observable, that the Jews acknowledged and understood these signs of the Messiah, as incommunicable to any other. Hence is that saying, *When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done*†? Hence the appeal our Lord makes to His own miracles, in order to satisfy that question of John's disciples, *Art*

° Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22, 23.

† John vii. 31.

Thou He Which should come, or do we look for another? The plain meaning whereof is, first, that one famous Person was expected, entitled by way of eminence, *He That should come*; and also that the greatness, and number, and quality of His miracles were a sufficient token, to point and single Him out when He did come. So that our Lord's argument (as I have formerly observed) lies thus. He Who does those many and mighty wonders, foretold by the prophets, is He That should come: your own senses are judges, whether I have done these wonders or not: and therefore, if your senses convince you that I have wrought such things, there cannot remain any reasonable doubt, but that I am He That should come.

3. *Thirdly*, Allowing some such characters to be laid down concerning the Messiah, it will follow, that if any of those prophecies were in some sense fulfilled in any of the eminent men of old, yet there was still another and sublimer sense, peculiar to the Messiah, which must be fulfilled in Him, and that, till this should be done, the utmost intent of those prophecies was not satisfied. This is the method taken by the apostles, particularly by St. Peter and St. Paul, in their discourses upon our Lord's resurrection. They prove that the passages of David and Isaiah were not fully made good in the persons who spoke them; not in the letter and most immediate signification; consequently that, supposing a double sense, and them to have any part in them, they had another Person in view, Who should give them their utmost accomplish-

^c Matt. xi. 3, 4, 5.

ment. Therefore, till that were done, the truth of God, Who dictated those expressions, had not fully discharged itself. That there were many predictions relating to the Messiah is a principle confessed by the Jews; either therefore the Messiah was never prophesied of, nor prefigured at all by such; (which the Jews will not all agree in:) or else, some prophecies and prefigurations, contained in the Old Testament, will require, and do contain a future and mystical interpretation even in the opinion of those, who admit a present and stricter interpretation. And if so, then that Person, in Whom that highest and ultimate construction is accomplished, ought to be received as the promised Messiah. That this method of expounding the Old Testament was generally received among the Jews seems probable from hence; that, when our Lord and His apostles made use of it, the enemies of the gospel are never said to have objected against it as an unfair way of arguing. All the evasions of this nature, which we now meet with, are only such miserable shifts as the Jews of later ages have taken sanctuary in; who, to cover their incorrigible unbelief, have thrown off those texts, which heretofore were universally acknowledged to point at the Christ. So that,

4. *Fourthly*, The whole turns at last upon the veracity of Almighty God, the Divine authority of the prophetic writings, and the agreement of what happened to our Jesus with those remarkable things foretold of the Messiah. If God be true, whatever He hath declared shall be must certainly come to pass; if the prophets wrote as they were inspired and

directed by the Holy Ghost, whatever they have laid down concerning the Messiah must needs be accomplished in His person : but the prophets did declare, that the Messiah should be cut off from the land of the living ; that He should die under such and such circumstances ; that after He was thus dead He should rise again : therefore the person who in all points made good these predictions, is undoubtedly the Christ. Now Jesus did thus die, and thus rise again ; no other person besides Himself ever did so ; and consequently Jesus, and no other person, is the Christ of God. Since therefore these disciples confessed, that such things were dictated by God Himself, and foretold of the Messiah ; and since they saw them punctually made good in their own Master ; His sufferings and death ought not to discourage or weaken their faith, because these were necessary to the character and office of Christ. Nay, had He not so suffered and died, He could not possibly have been the Christ. Thus again ; in regard the same Person, so described heretofore to *suffer and die*, was likewise foretold to *rise again the third day* ; the demonstrations He had now given them, upon that very day from His death, of His being actually risen, were an irrefragable evidence that all the glorious benefits, which the world was to expect from the promised Messiah, were to be depended upon from, and would most assuredly be found in Jesus. So that they might boldly witness these things to the world, and preach *repentance and remission of sins in His name* : in His, I say, Who thus *died for the sins* of mankind, *and thus rose again for their justification* ^b.

^b Luke xxiv. 37. Rom. iv. 25.

These are considerations exceedingly proper for this solemnity, to satisfy every Christian what a firm foundation his faith stands upon, and to put all its enemies to confusion. But, unless we do something *more than argue* for our Saviour's resurrection, it had been the same thing to us, if He had never risen at all. The second lesson for this morning's service, and the Epistle for the day tells us largely what use is to be made of this article:—that owning, and being baptized into the belief of it, implies our being conformed to the likeness of what our Saviour hath done:—that we must rise with Him, and prove that we do so, by *setting our affections on things above*ⁱ:—that, *like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*:—that, *as He died to sin once, and now liveth unto God, so we should reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God*^k; alive like Him, over Whom the law of sin and death hath no more dominion, and Who returned not a second time to corruption.

Remember, then, that Christ is risen; but remember withal, that they only will have comfort of His rising, who are thus risen with Him. The great revolution of the whole world, its second and better creation to immortality, began this day. But if we have no part in it, by reformation and a new life, we are of all men most miserable. Our Prince and King hath overcome indeed *the sharpness of death*: but it is to believers only that *He hath opened the kingdom of heaven*: And such believers are only they who prove their faith by

ⁱ Col. iii. 2.

^k Rom. vi. 4, 10, 11.

their works. And to those He hath gigen a sure comfort: such an one, as *neither tribulation nor distress, nor even death* itself can rob them of. For since their *Redeemer liveth, they are certain, that though, after their skin, worms destroy this body, yet there will come another day, when in their flesh they shall see God*¹. Whom God grant us to behold and to see ourselves, that is, for our own unspeakable and everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹ Rom. viii. 35, 38. Job xix. 25, 26.

THE END.

